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Hundreds of ideas and  
how-to instructions for  
the entire family to join  
in the fun and happiness  
of

# CHRISTMAS LIGHTING

AND

# DECORATING

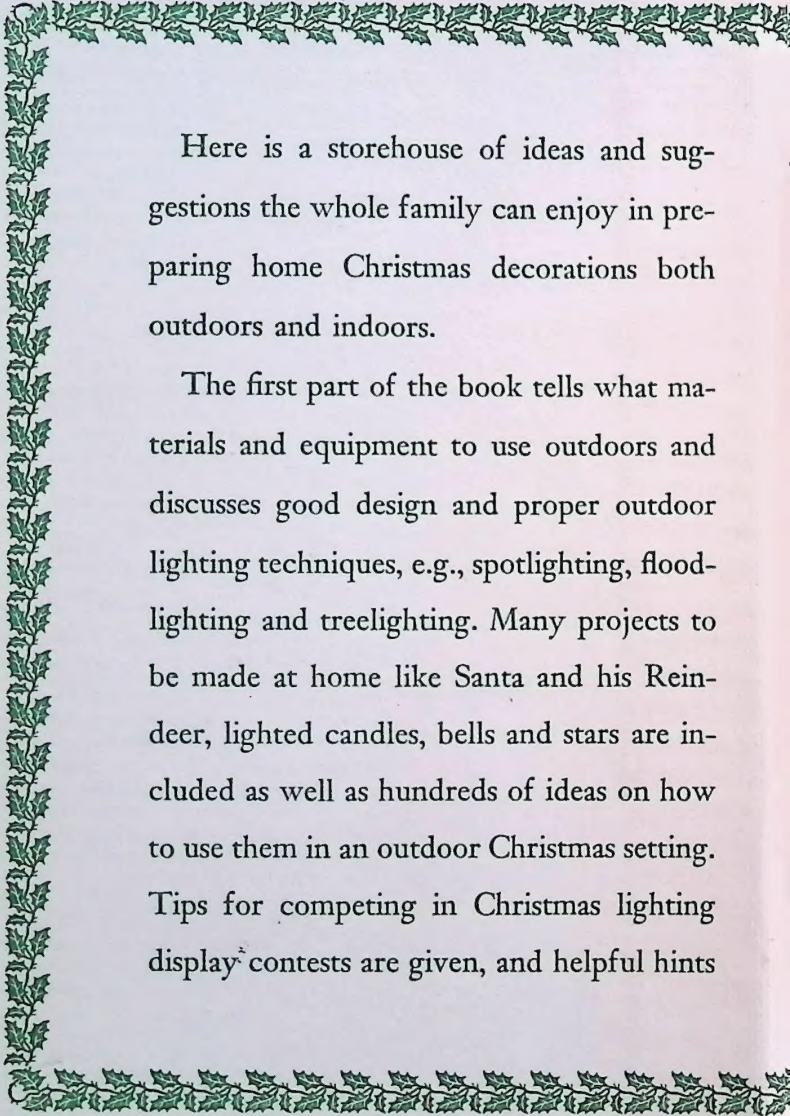
FOR THE HOME  
INDOORS • OUTDOORS

*By*

THEODORE  
SAROS








Here is a storehouse of ideas and suggestions the whole family can enjoy in preparing home Christmas decorations both outdoors and indoors.


The first part of the book tells what materials and equipment to use outdoors and discusses good design and proper outdoor lighting techniques, e.g., spotlighting, floodlighting and treelighting. Many projects to be made at home like Santa and his Reindeer, lighted candles, bells and stars are included as well as hundreds of ideas on how to use them in an outdoor Christmas setting. Tips for competing in Christmas lighting display contests are given, and helpful hints



on photographing decorations are included.

Indoor decorations, including basic information on materials, equipment, design and lighting procedure, are covered next. Decorating projects utilize traditional materials but also emphasize the unusual, for decorating hallways, windows, mantels, tables, walls, etc. An entire chapter is included on the Christmas tree, and there are sections on gift wrapping and on individual Christmas cards to make at home.

Throughout the book each step is clearly discussed and pictured with many striking photographs that make each idea and project easy to understand.



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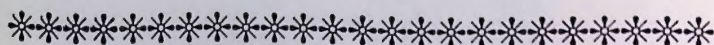
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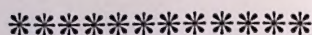
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*Christmas Lighting  
and Decorating*

# Christmas and



Outdoors and Indoors



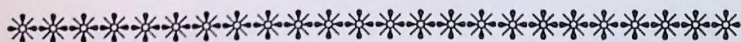
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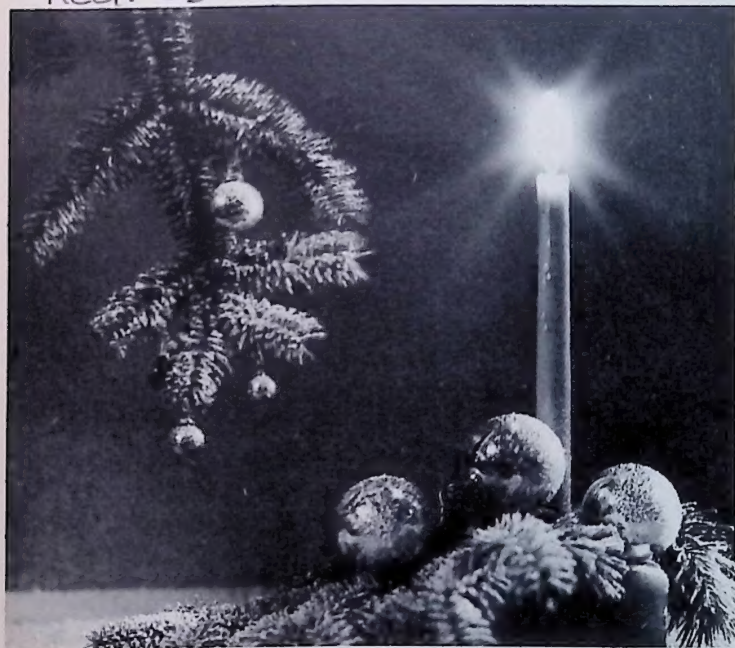


# Lighting Decorating

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D. VAN NOSTRAND COMPANY, INC.

NEW YORK: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 250 Fourth Ave., New York 3

TORONTO: D. Van Nostrand Co. (Canada), Ltd., 25 Hollinger Rd.

LONDON: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., St. Martin's St., W.C. 2

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Published simultaneously in Canada

by D. VAN NOSTRAND COMPANY (Canada), LTD.

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The information and many of the illustrations for this book have come from a variety of sources. Sincere gratitude is extended to all who have cooperated by offering informational material—the Government agencies, the garden clubs, the business organizations concerned with Christmas decoration—but special thanks are due to: The Lamp Division of General Electric Co., Nela Park, Cleveland; the Electric Power Board of Chattanooga, Tennessee; the Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, New York; Mrs. W. H. Barton, The Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan, Inc.; Mrs. Howard S. Kittel, Texas Garden Clubs, Inc.; and Mrs. Herman L. Bischof, The Garden Club of Indiana; and Noma Lites Inc.

### ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY: Figures 6, 11, 15, 16, 24, 31, 40, 41, 46, 47, 49, 50, 52, 77, 78, 83, 85, 86, 87, 88, 91, 95, 96, 97, 103, 104, 105

SYLVANIA ELECTRIC COMPANY: Figures 13, 33, 34, 37, 44, 45, 51, 54, 56, 60, 61

DOUGLAS FIR PLYWOOD ASSOCIATION: Figures 21, 22, 36, 43

NOMA LITES INC.: Cover illustrations, Figure 59

FLORISTS TELEGRAPH DELIVERY ASSOCIATION: Figures 71, 79, 93, 94

U. S. FOREST SERVICE: Figure 74

MINNESOTA MINING & MANUFACTURING COMPANY (SCOTCH BRAND TAPE): Figures 75, 82, 98, 106, 107, 109, 110

DU PONT COMPANY: Figure 84

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I



## The Home Outdoors . . . A Christmas Fairyland



In America, in the cities, the towns, the villages, in the suburban-sleek communities and in the old neighborhoods, there comes a time when the voices of the experts are still for a while and the American home expresses its own individuality and decorative skill for the world to see. And that time is Christmas, the Season of Light and Good Cheer.

A ride through the land of America at night during the Yuletide is a trip through Christmas fairylands that not too long existed only in the dreams of children on Christmas Eve. Santa Claus and his reindeer, etched in light against the black night sky, ride the snow-capped roofs of thousands of homes; huge candles flank the gaily decorated front door and glow with a warm light of welcome for the passerby; ethereally lighted creches bespeak the spiritual feelings of the

Nativity; and frosty trees glitter against a backdrop of a light-bejeweled house.

Much has happened since the night Martin Luther decorated the first Christmas tree in Germany with a few lighted candles to capture the beauty of the stars he had seen shining through a snow-laden evergreen. Today in America millions of homes are electrified for light. The magic of the plastics industry has brought to lighted Christmas decorations pure, delightful colors at a cost most Americans can afford. Companies like General Electric produce almost a million Christmas lamps every day, all year, and, during the Season, Christmas lamps far outnumber the ordinary lamps used in the average home.

Christmas lighting display contests are fast becoming an American institution, and many households find themselves in friendly competition with their neighbors. This is one facet of "Keeping up with the Joneses" that need not fray the nerves and deplete the pocketbook. The average American's natural gift for inventiveness and his delight in doing things for himself combine to make decorating the home during the Christmas Season a relatively inexpensive project full of fun and satisfaction.

Many of the decorating ideas included in this book can be worked out with easily available household materials and tools. All that is required are a familiarity with a few basic principles of good design, some lighting "know-how," and some simple skills, such as using a hammer, a saw, or a paint brush, with, of course, a little bit of ingenuity.

Don't approach the job of decorating the home outdoors on the basis of a one-shot proposition. It is a rare home-owner indeed who, having once been bitten by the outdoor Christmas decorating bug, can forget the whole thing come next Christmas time. Consequently, study the outside of your house and grounds carefully and conceive a decorating plan for the exterior as you would like it eventually to look during



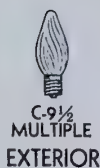
the Holiday Season. Then you can build your decorating scheme year by year, adding as you go along, so that each year you need spend but a modest sum for the materials and lighting equipment. In this manner, you will always be able to use what you have already accumulated without marring the over-all beauty of the decorating scheme.

Of course, no plan need be so inflexible that a new idea can't be introduced, especially nowadays, when such things as aluminum strip lighting and pin-type sockets are available. The recent technique of strip lighting for building Christmas decorations, which is explained later in detail, will offer you a multitude of lighting designs that can be rearranged in succeeding years to accommodate new ideas. The purpose of using a plan, after all, is not to strait-jacket you, but to offer you a method whereby you can achieve the best results with the minimum expenditure of time and money.

As you read through this book, then, keep in mind the plan you will make for your own dwelling. In the pages that follow, you will find the basic principles of design and color you should know, the materials and equipment you can employ, the instructional information needed to make the decorations, and a variety of ideas to use or adapt to your own needs. It is not intended that you slavishly copy a particular display, nor is it supposed that you would want to. A house is not really a "home" until it too acquires some of the individuality of its inhabitants.

## CHRISTMAS TREE LAMPS

Red  
Blue  
Green  
Orange  
White



## OTHER LAMPS FOR EXTERIOR OR INTERIOR USE

Clear  
Blue  
Green  
Red  
Orange  
Flametint  
Yellow  
White



10-WATT S-11

Clear  
Inside Frost  
Blue  
Green  
Red  
Orange  
Yellow  
White



6-WATT S-14  
10-WATT S-14  
(also available in  
Ivory and Flametint)

White  
Orange  
Flametint  
Ivory  
Yellow  
Blue  
Green  
Red



Inside Frost  
Daylight Clear  
25-WATT A-19

## OTHER LAMPS FOR INTERIOR USE



15-WATT F-10

Clear  
Flametint  
Ivory  
White



25-WATT F-15

Clear  
Orange  
Blue  
Green  
Red  
White



7 1/2-WATT S-11

Clear  
Blue  
Green  
Red  
Inside Frost



15-WATT A-15



150-WATT PAR-38  
Projector Spot and  
Flood Lamps

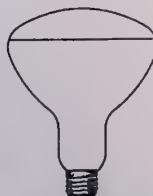


25-WATT G-18 1/2

Flametint  
Ivory  
White



25 AND 40-WATT  
G-25



150 AND 300-WATT  
R-40 Spot and Flood  
(interior use)



75-WATT R-30  
Reflector Spot and  
Flood (interior use)

Figure 1. Lamps for use in Christmas lighting decoration.

# 1

## *Outdoor Lighting Equipment and Decorative Materials*



### LIGHTING EQUIPMENT

Lighting equipment for Christmas decorating outdoors is usually constructed so that it is weatherproof and watertight. On the other hand, lighting equipment specifically designed for indoor use is not necessarily weatherproof. Consequently, it is very important that you do not use indoor equipment for outdoor lighting. Some equipment, however, can be employed both outdoors and indoors, and this equipment is usually labeled as suitable for both indoor and outdoor lighting.

### LAMPS

Figure 1 shows the Christmas lamps that are available for outdoor use, as well as the lamps that should be used indoors only. The colored lamps should be constructed of natural-colored material or the color should be coated inside the bulb. If they are painted on the outside, the colors will flake off or



fade when exposed to winter weather. In addition to the lamps shown in Figure 1, there are, of course, the many everyday-use type of lamps in various colors that can be used in an outdoor decorating scheme. Be sure, however, that they either are weatherproof constructed or are sheltered from dampness and moisture.

Christmas lamps have four types of screw bases: miniature-screw base; candelabra-screw base; intermediate-screw base; and medium-screw base. Of the four only the medium-base lamp will fit the regular standard-sized household sockets. The miniature-screw base type includes the C-6 Christmas tree lamps; candelabra-screw base, C-7½; intermediate base,



Figure 2. *Three methods of mounting a projector lamp holder. (Left to right) swivel type; bracket type with screw holes; and spike type.*

C-9½, S-11; medium-base, S-14, A-19, F-15, as well as the projector lamps and reflector lamps.

Outdoor Christmas lamps on a string should be of the multiple burning type; that is, each lamp on the string should burn independently. If one lamp goes out, the others will remain lighted.

#### FLOODLAMPS AND SPOTLAMPS

No outdoor lighting scheme can be truly effective without the use of either outdoor floodlamps or spotlamps, or both. The projector lamp most commonly used for outdoor residential lighting is the PAR 38. The letters PAR stand for "para-

bolic aluminized reflector." There are two types of projector lamps: the spotlamp and the floodlamp. The floodlamp usually throws a beam twice the width of that thrown by the spotlamp.

Outdoor-type holders for the lamps should be obtained that will enable you to fasten the projector to a wall, a roof, a board base, a tree, or to spike it into the ground. Figure 2 shows a typical outdoor lamp holder, as well as the various methods of mounting the holder by the use of different attachments.

Caps in various colors are available which clamp over the lamp to provide colored light. For temporary use, a filter of theatrical gelatin can be waterproofed by dipping it in clear lacquer. The filter can then be fastened over the face of the lamp.

Do not use reflector lamps outdoors, unless they are equipped with heat-resistant bulbs. These are normally designed for indoor use only and are designated by the capital letter R.

#### SOCKETS FOR OUTDOOR LIGHTING

As indicated previously, sockets for outdoor use should be weatherproof. Some manufacturers equip outdoor sockets with rubber washers or gaskets that keep out dampness and moisture.

Sockets on a string are usually spaced 18 inches apart. Often, however, a more effective lighting display demands that the lamps be spaced closer together in order to obtain, let us say, the impression of a ribbon of light. A simple way to accomplish this is to lay three lamp strings on the ground and to tape them together as shown in Figure 3. Notice how by staggering the sockets they can be arranged about 6 inches apart instead of the usual 18 inches.

Pin-type sockets are also available that can be attached to outdoor wires simply by screwing on a cap. These sockets

are wired in parallel so that, if one lamp goes out, the others remain lighted. They allow the home-owner a wide flexibility of design for outdoor lighting decoration.

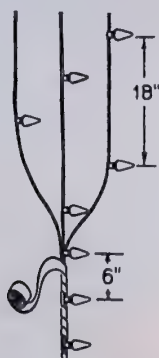


Figure 3. *Taping three strings of lamps together to obtain closer spacing of the lamps.*

#### ALUMINUM STRIP LIGHTING

The recent technique of strip lighting promises to be one of the most practical methods yet devised for using Christmas lamps in outdoor decorations. The aluminum strip is easy to handle and easy to store. Fewer nails and supports are needed to install the strips so that possible damage to the house is considerably reduced.

Figure 4 shows the two basic forms available, the flexible strip and the rigid strip. The strips, made of aluminum, are quite weatherproof and durable. Lamps (C-7½ or C-9½) can be placed as close as 4 inches apart, and the flexible and rigid strips, in 2-foot, 3-foot, and 6-foot units, can be hooked together to create many interesting designs. Also available are ready-wired shapes such as stars, circles, and diamonds, about 14 inches in diameter. These are shown in Figure 16.



More about the practicality of this new technique and its potentiality for making every home-owner an expert designer in outdoor Christmas lighting will be given on pp. 24-25.

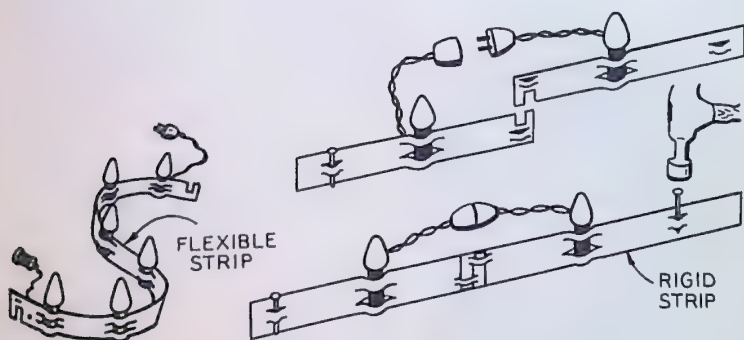


Figure 4. *Aluminum strips of Christmas lamps. Notice how the individual strips can be hooked together to form a variety of lighting designs.*

#### OUTLETS AND WIRE

A permanent outdoor wiring system, with underground cable or conduit leading to a weatherproof outlet box, is, of course, the most desirable power source for exterior Christmas lighting. However, not many homes are equipped in this manner, although such a system pays dividends not only during the Christmas Season but also during the summer in beautiful garden lighting effects as well as in convenient power for lawn mowers, hedge clippers, etc.

The next best arrangement for Christmas lighting outdoors is the use of a permanent outdoor-type receptacle with its own exterior electric circuit or a protected garage light or porch light socket. Indoor receptacles can be put to use, however, by raising a window slightly and inserting a snug-fitting board with a hole drilled in it to bring the electric wire

outside. A stick can then be used to lock the window, as shown in Figure 5.

All wire used for outdoor lighting should be of a heavy-duty and weatherproof type. No. 12 or 14 rubber-covered wire is satisfactory. This type of wire should also be used for all extension cords that you may need.

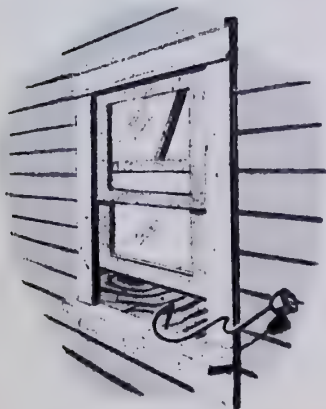


Figure 5. *Improvised method of connecting to indoor outlets for outdoor lighting.*

#### OTHER LIGHTING EQUIPMENT

In addition to the foregoing equipment, which is essential to the lighting job of decorating the home outdoors during the Christmas Season, there are other pieces of equipment that can make the job easier and add to the effectiveness of the decorating scheme.

Flashers are available for flashing effects; these produce about 14-18 flashes per minute.

Lamp and fuse testers are convenient to have to avoid the irritation of locating and replacing defective lamps or fuses once they are in place.

Safety fuse plugs can be purchased that attach to the Christmas lamp cord and give local fuse protection, thus safeguarding the regular electric circuits of the house and reducing the fire hazard.

A remote-control extension cord set with a switch that enables you to turn lamps on or off is a convenient accessory that also means extra safety in case of trouble.

And then, of course, there is the bewildering variety of ready-made, completely wired outdoor decorations such as Santas, reindeer, sleighs, plaques, candles, snowmen, stars, wreaths, bells, candy canes, Christmas stockings, trees, creches, angels, and so on.

### OUTDOOR DECORATIVE MATERIALS

Although the ingenuity of the American family is on display every day of the year, during the Christmas Season it reaches miraculous proportions. Old stovepipes suddenly become transformed into brilliant candles; chicken wire takes on the joyous form of Christmas bells; and discarded nylon stockings become lovely evergreen garlands to frame the front door. In the short space of this book, no attempt will be made to list all the materials that can be used. But here are some that are suggestive of the kinds of material easily available and adaptable to Christmas decorating outdoors.

Poultry netting (chicken wire)

Plywood (exterior type)

Composition board

Wood

Masonite

Hardware cloth or screening

Stovepipe

Cel-o-glas (translucent, plastic-coated wire mesh in colors)

Tinsel

Oilcloth

Sheet metal

Paint (weatherproof), regular or fluorescent

Rain spouts

Mailing tubes



Metallic foil  
Snow (aerosol)  
Coat hangers  
Wire  
Cotton batting (fireproof)  
Plastic foam  
Evergreens  
Traditional Christmas decorations and ornaments (weather resistant)

You will need electrician's staples (be sure they are insulated), a sturdy ladder, rubber and friction tape, screw eyes and hooks, nails, and, of course, some tools usually found around the house: saws, pliers, etc.

One word of caution again. Remember you are making decorations for outdoor use. The materials used should be resistant to weather and, if they are to be wired for light, they should not be easily inflammable.

## 2

# *Good Design and Outdoor Lighting Procedures*

---

When you undertake to decorate your home outdoors during the Christmas Season, you are in a position comparable to the artist when he composes a painting. The final Christmas lighting scheme will be viewed by many people, and the impression they carry away will depend on how effectively you have "painted with light" on the broad canvas that is the exterior of your home.

### LET YOUR HOUSE AND GROUNDS HELP YOU

Look at your house or area to be decorated and ask yourself: What aspects of the house and grounds deserve to be displayed? Which features should be concealed? What elements can be added to make a pleasing composition? Decide what architectural features you want to emphasize: the high pitch of the roof or gables, the chimney, the front door, or the picture window. And, if you are fortunate enough to have a heavy cover of snow, don't overlook its splendid possibilities for enhancing your decorating scheme.

Sometimes just the slant of a roof top or gable can suggest a design. In the lower picture of Figure 6, the gables have created a natural pattern that can be followed when installing lights. In addition to colored lights on a string, floodlamps with color caps can be placed in front of the house to bathe

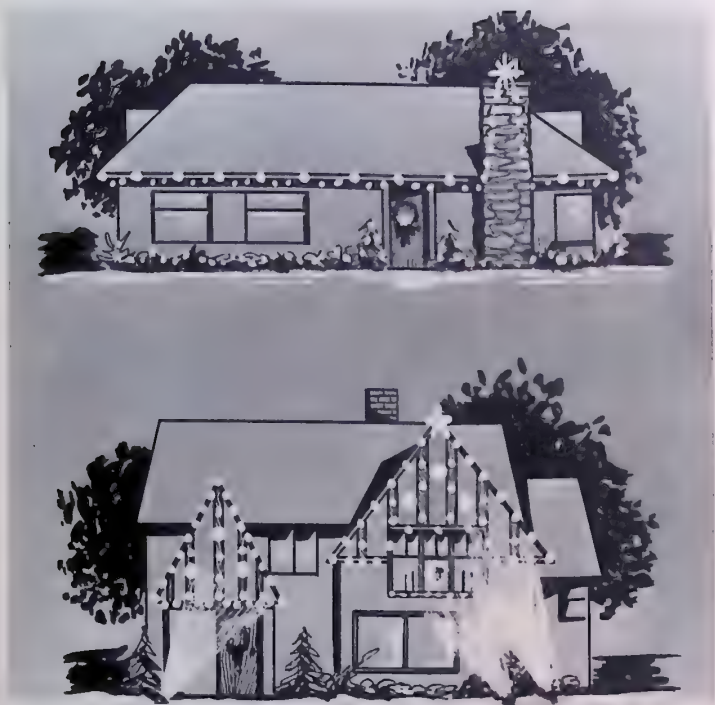


Figure 6. Architectural features of house suggest lighting designs.  
(Upper) Modern ranch style. (Bottom) House featuring gables.

it in soft green or other appropriately colored light.

On the other hand, modern ranch-type homes will need a pattern of lighting that emphasizes the horizontal low sleekness of these dwellings. Notice, however, in the upper picture of Figure 6 how the lights are carried along the eaves until



they reach the chimney where they follow its line in a sharp upward sweep, culminating in a bright, stylized star. Here, again, an architectural feature of the house—the chimney—has been taken advantage of to create a lighting design.

Figure 7 shows another effective treatment of the ranch-type home. Three projector lamps, well-shielded, provide the general illumination and emphasize the straight lines of the eaves. Notice how the horizontal design is accented by the sign mounted on the roof; the wreaths in the windows are



Figure 7. *Flow of horizontal movement of ranch-style home emphasized by good lighting technique.*

also perfectly aligned across the house. Even the three wise men approaching the home-made creche add to the feeling of horizontal movement.

#### SELECT A THEME OR MOOD

By selecting a theme or mood for your decorating scheme outdoors you are almost compelled to achieve a unified, pleasing effect. If you are making your first attempt at Christmas



Figure 8. *On the roof, Santa's helpers are busy unloading gifts and handing them to Santa who presumably has disappeared down the chimney. The gay, rollicking atmosphere is carried out by the cute cutouts on the lawn and the sparkling stars in the windows.*

outdoor lighting, you may want to start with a simple theme at the doorway and plan to develop it in succeeding years, adding units to the other parts of the house as you go on. Each unit should have a relation, however, to the theme you originally selected. As an integral part of the composition these added decorations will be much more effective than if they had been used alone.

The theme can be suggested by the feeling that a home inspires as you view it. Does the house lend itself to the rollicking gaiety of the figures that appear in Figure 8? Looking at the display pictured in Figure 8, one can almost feel the jolly hospitality of the home itself.

On the other hand, study the decorations of the house pictured in Figure 9. To surround the stately dignity of this lovely Southern home with the mischievous capers of gnomes, etc., would be ridiculously inappropriate. The mood of this home is serenity and it is carried out with meticulous care. The decorative motif of the two bay windows and the door-

way suggests graceful living, while the formality of the candle-lighted windows is in tasteful keeping with the theme.

#### FOCAL POINTS OR CENTERS OF INTEREST

An essential feature of good design is to help, not hinder, the spectator's eyes. An overdone, cluttered outdoor decoration not only confuses the viewer, but actually is a source of irritation.

There should be a center of interest, or focal point, for the eye to rest on. If you use two or more centers of interest in your decorating scheme, keep them well separated so that they do not compete with one another.

Focal points can be emphasized by the use of strong illumination in contrast to the other levels of lighting, by color contrast, and by style and size in relation to the other elements of the decorating scheme. Strings of colored lamps wrapped with greens also can lead the eye toward a focal point in your display if the depth and length of the evergreen

*Figure 9. Appropriateness of decorating scheme is accentuated by the soft light of the window units. Notice how the over-all decoration is unified by the general illumination of flood-lighting.*



twigs are decreased as this point is reached. To help the spectator's eye in changing direction, use a lamp of contrasting color at the point of direction change. Figure 10 shows an example of using strings of lamps to direct the eye to a center of interest—the large star on the chimney.



Figure 10. *Use of strings of lights to lead the eye to a focal point.*

Another very interesting way to focus attention on a center of interest is to use strings of Christmas lamps that have been anchored on the lawn and that come together in a stream of light to a focal point on the house. You will get a cascade-of-light effect which is really quite dazzling. Use at least four strings of lamps and attach them at the lawn to wooden pegs that have been driven into the ground. Space the pegs about 6 feet apart in a sort of semi-circle about the house. Then connect the free ends of the wires to a lighted star that illuminates a top window in the house or to some other decoration that serves as a focal point on the house.

Secondary points of interest in your decorating scheme should help carry out the theme but should not compete for



attention with the focal point. These supplementary units should be so related within the entire scheme that the picture would be incomplete without them. Illumination of these points should be subdued, in contrast to that of the focal point.

Finally, floodlamps can provide the general illumination which will unify the several elements of an outdoor Christmas lighting scene.

#### SPOT- AND FLOOD-LIGHTING

In addition to the above-mentioned advantage, projector



Figure 11. *Flood-lighting creates an artistic, dignified appearance.*

lamps can be used to emphasize texture of the unit being lighted, to cast interesting shadows, and to accentuate the architectural lines of a home. Also, diffused light over the entire area from well-placed floodlamps will eliminate glare, reduce undesirable sharp contrasts, and prevent unwanted shadows.

For example, Figure 11 shows a home lighted almost entirely by the use of floodlamps. PAR 38's (150-watt) with blue glass covers bathe the entire house in a soft blue light. The floodlamps are concealed by the low shrubbery of the

front lawn. Notice how the angular lines of the house are accented, and how a feeling of depth is created.

Here are a few more hints on how to use floodlamps and spotlamps.

To determine the distance at which you should place floodlamps from the area or display you want to flood-light, mount your lamp at a distance equal to the maximum dimension of the area being lighted. (See Figure 12a.) This rule applies if

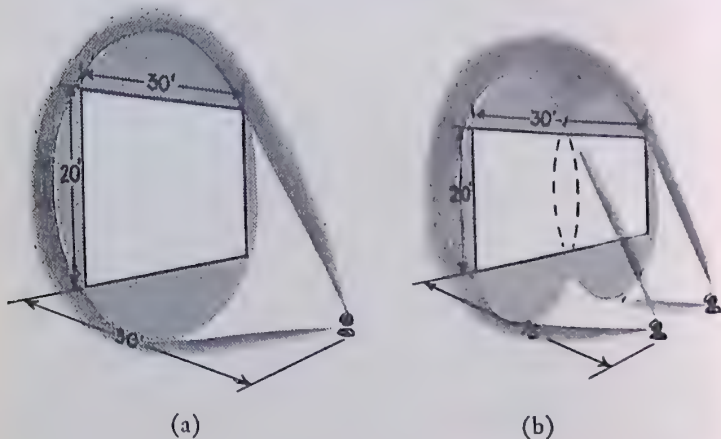


Figure 12. *Finding the distance at which floodlamps should be placed.*

you use only one lamp and you desire a smooth lighting effect, although not necessarily bright.

If you want greater illumination, use two lamps and cut the distance in half. (See Figure 12b.) Beam spreads should overlap if uniform brightness on the area is desired since you are getting more intense light but at a shorter range. Of course, you can get variations of brightness by moving the lamps closer to the display.

To emphasize texture, for example the stone siding of a wall, use more lamps close to the foundation and aim them upward.



Figure 13. *Silhouetting a cutout on a lighted surface.*

Make every effort to conceal and shield projector spot- and floodlamps. Shields of snow, wood, sheet metal, or evergreen tree cuttings can be devised and built at home, or an ornamental device such as a flower can contain a spotlight in its design. By all means, take advantage of any low shrubs in which to hide lamps. If the source of light can be seen by a spectator, his eye is naturally attracted to it and not to the display you are lighting. Shielding devices, in addition to decoratively concealing the lamp from view, will also serve to protect the lamp and socket.

Spotlamps, especially if they are in a person's line of sight, often are not only annoying but dangerously blinding in the path of a person leaving the house. Locate them above or at an angle to the normal view of the departing guest. If you use a single lamp in a doorway, place it so that the door swings toward the lamp to prevent blinding the departing guest.

Spotlamps can be employed effectively to create interesting shadows, especially if they are used in conjunction with floodlamps. The spotlamp has a narrower, more intense beam than the floodlamp, about one-half the width of the beam of the latter. Spotlamps pick up the highlights of decorations, add sparkle to the display, and provide a strong concentrated illumination in the midst of the diffused light from a floodlamp.

The interesting shadow of a prancing red-nosed reindeer on the lighted side of a house can be produced by a small cutout placed in front of a spotlamp concealed in the shrubbery (Figure 13). Even very small cutouts can have their shapes projected in large shadows on a light-colored wall by properly positioning the projector lamp and cutout.



Figure 14. *How to obtain colored shadow effects with a cutout, a spotlamp, and a floodlamp.*

For colored shadow effects, arrange a projector spotlamp, a cutout figure, and a color-capped floodlamp as shown in Figure 14. The intense white light from the spotlamp in the midst of the diffused colored light from the floodlamp will produce a most striking lighting effect. The size and location of the colored shadow can be varied to suit your taste merely by changing the position of the lamps. One word of caution.





Figure 15. *The use of strip lighting to obtain bands of light. Metallic foil has been used as a reflecting background for the lights to accentuate the band-of-light effect. The lighted circle above the doorway is made from the rigid circle aluminum strip. Notice how the house number is also clearly illuminated.*

In creating shadows, be sure that long, deep undesirable ones do not incidentally result.

#### USING COLORED LIGHT

In using colored light, it is important to know the effect that one color produces upon another. A green light thrown upon the red suit of a Santa Claus, for example, would change the color of Santa's suit to a nondescript brown. On the other hand, to enhance the natural green of evergreens, use a pale green or blue-green color filter. The safest procedure, if not the most interesting, is to use white light on colored objects, although you can experiment with color caps on a projector lamp until you are satisfied with the results.

Here are a few more examples of the effect of colored light on the color of the display you are lighting.

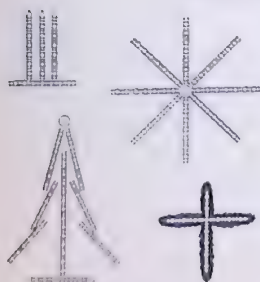
Red light on yellow appears as orange  
Yellow light on dark blue appears as greenish-gray  
Blue light on red appears as violet  
Blue light on orange appears as brown  
Blue light on yellow appears as green

#### STRING AND STRIP LIGHTING

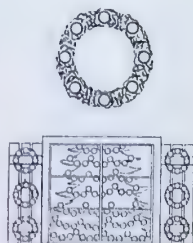
By changing the spacing and the color of lamps lighted on a string, a variety of effects can be achieved. (See page 7 for changing the spacing of lights on a string.) If the lamps are spaced far apart, they appear as points of light. If, however, the lamps are spaced closely, they give the effect of bands of light. In Figure 15 aluminum strip lighting with lamps spaced 4 inches apart is used to achieve this kind of effect.

Figure 16 shows the great variety of designs possible with the use of aluminum strip lighting technique. The perfect alignment of the lamps will give you the neatness and perfect symmetry of expert design. Another advantage is that

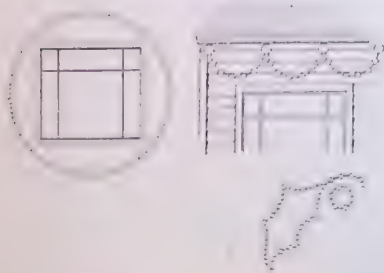
...WITH RIGID STRIPS



...WITH RIGID CIRCLES



...WITH FLEXIBLE STRIPS



...WITH COMBINATIONS OF CIRCLES AND STRIPS

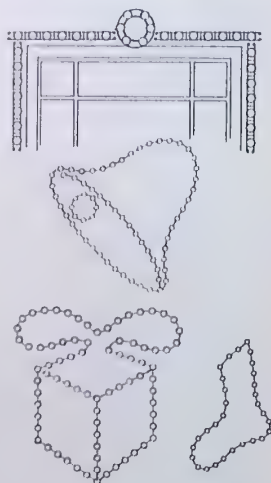


Figure 16. Creating designs of light with the new strip lighting technique. Three basic units are used: rigid strips, flexible strips, and rigid circles. In succeeding years, you can rearrange last year's designs into new ones like those shown in the lower part of the illustration.

you can rearrange previous years' pieces into new designs by hooking on new strips each year.

Pin-type sockets that can be fastened to outdoor wire by

screwing on a cap also allow you to space lamps of various colors to meet your lighting design needs.

Attractive color effects can be obtained in Christmas lamp strings or strips by using alternate-colored bulbs to produce intermediate hues. For example, blue and green will appear as blue-green, blue and red will appear as violet, and so on. You often will get better results, however, by using only one or two colors rather than all the colors that are available.

Strings of lamps can play an important role in unifying the various elements of your lighting scheme. They can be very useful also in creating independent units of design. Concealed, they give subtle light to shadow boxes, flower boxes, cornices, eaves, and so on.

#### FESTOONS

We have already discussed the usefulness of lighted festoons in directing the eye to a center of interest. In addition they are well adapted to the creation of interesting stylized patterns, such as giant Christmas trees on a large wall (see Figure 40), as well as for outlining the architectural features of a house, such as eaves, gables, chimneys, etc.

By wrapping greens around the wire, festoons can be made quite attractive for viewing during the daytime. Tie the greens to the wire with sturdy binding cord. The expense of making festoons can be kept to a minimum by using pin-type sockets and outdoor wire. These sockets are of the multiple type, so that if one lamp burns out, the others remain lighted.

When festooning is an integral part of your outdoor decorating plan, it is advisable to hang the wire from screw eyes or hooks. The wire should be taped so that it will not rub thin against the hooks; or you can make a loop with the tape to hang the wire from the screw eye so that the wire itself is free of contact with the screw eye. Hooks should be spaced close enough so that they give good support to the festoon and prevent it from flapping in a strong wind and possibly breaking the lamps.



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**ADDITIONAL TIPS ON LIGHTING PROCEDURE**

Although no hard-and-fast rules can be made for lighting procedures to fit each problem, there are a few "common-sense" principles that can be kept in mind.

1. Do not overdo your lighting displays, especially so that the result looks more like a carnival rather than a Christmas decorating scene. In this connection, remember that low levels of light are relatively bright when seen in contrast to the darkness of night.
2. Don't forget that your home and grounds will be viewed in the daytime as well as during the night. Conceal as much as possible all projector lamps, wires and extension cords, and other lighting equipment not intended for display purposes. The art of camouflage should still be alive in many of our war veterans, and the drab olive-green paint can still be used to advantage in blending these items with the foliage and shrubbery.
3. Choose traditional Christmas decorations. Christmas without Santas, wreaths, candles, etc., is hardly Christmas at all. Of course, originality in their design and use is most desirable.
4. Avoid excessive general lighting that destroys the exciting effects of highlights and results in a flat appearance.
5. In using spotlamps and floodlamps, be sure that the light source cannot be seen by the spectator.
6. Keep the size of your decorations in scale to the areas in which they are used. A giant snowman on a small lawn may be overwhelming but he will jar the artistic sensibilities of the viewer. On the other hand, an undersized wreath on a huge front door can be ludicrous.
7. Use ingenuity in taking advantage of the existing surroundings.
8. And, above all, have some fun. This means don't get overambitious too late in the Season. Here's where a well-thought-out plan conceived early enough will avoid overwork and frustration.

## SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

Christmas time is, of course, a time for gaiety, but also it should be a time for common sense—especially if you are dealing with electricity. Simple precautions will not detract one bit from the fun and satisfaction that can be derived from making your home lovely and bright during the Yuletide. Many of the following suggestions may be already known, but they certainly bear repeating and remembering.

1. All electrical equipment used outdoors should be weatherproof.
2. Extension cords and wires used for connecting outdoor sets should be heavy-duty, jacketed type with lacquered braid finish or rubber jacket.
3. Sockets used outdoors, if exposed to precipitation, should, as much as possible, hang downward so that water or snow won't collect in them.
4. Wiring should be arranged so that plug-in connections are higher than the cords attached to them to prevent water from draining into the connections.
5. Metallic decoration, such as metal foil and metal reflectors, should be kept from contact with metal lamp shells and metal socket parts.
6. Use lamps of standard-brand manufacture and electrical equipment listed by the Underwriter's Laboratories.
7. Don't overload the electrical circuits of your house. If a fuse blows because of an overloaded circuit, reduce the load by disconnecting units in your outdoor lighting display or turn off appliances and lights in the house connected to the same circuit.
8. Always replace a burned-out fuse with a new fuse of the same amperage, usually 15 amperes. Never use substitute materials for fuses.
9. Check the condition of all your equipment before you use it, especially damaged wire insulation, loose con-

nections, and broken sockets. Worn, broken, or frayed parts should be either replaced with new, safe equipment or necessary repairs should be made.

10. When you pull a Christmas lamp set out of its box, don't coddle it. Give it a strong, straight yank. If there are any loose or broken wires, it is better to know it right then and there than after they are part of your display.
11. For both safety and convenience, arrange a way of turning off light equipment by the use of an easily accessible switch.
12. Make sure that all lighted cutout figures are well supported and anchored to stand up against strong winds. Use guy wires, ground stakes, and sandbags where necessary.
13. Turn the lights off when the viewing period is ended. Most residential circuits carry a higher voltage during the daytime so that the life of your lamps will be shortened if you keep them on unnecessarily during the day.
14. Use a good, strong ladder; a fall may end your decorating fun rather abruptly.
15. Check fire extinguishers or put the garden hose where it will be handy to use if the need arises.

#### TROUBLE-SHOOTING HINTS

Most often the trouble is one of three things: a plug which has become unplugged, a fuse which has blown, or a lamp bulb which has burned out. These three items should be checked in this order. If removable pin-type sockets are used, the back of the socket can become unloosened. If only one lamp in this type of string is out and a new lamp does not cure the trouble, try tightening the back of the socket. If a string of lights burns to a certain point and is dark from there on, look for broken wire in the section between the lighted and dark lamps.

#### OVERLOADING CIRCUITS

Basement or attic circuits are the most commonly used to supply the exterior lighting display. Tools and other appliances are often connected to these circuits. As long as this equipment is not used during the hours that the display is on, there is little danger of overloading the circuit, provided not too many lamps in the display are connected to the circuit. If your display is elaborate and requires more lamps than the circuit can stand, consult your local electric power company. It may supply special wires or instructions or better methods of obtaining power from the circuits already in the house.

Installing special circuits for the exterior of the house is something well worth considering. Not only do you eliminate the danger of overloading existing house circuits and bring convenient power to your Christmas display, but also you have a ready source of electricity for summer lawn parties, power garden tools, etc.



# 3

## *Outdoor Decorative Projects*



Outdoor Christmas decorative units, such as Santas, bells, wreaths, and candles, are, of course, commercially available in a bewildering variety, and most of them are well worth the investment. However, the do-it-yourself spirit in many people often cannot be denied, and the Christmas Season offers a unique opportunity to give it full rein.

The projects given in this book have been selected for two reasons:

1. They are constructed with ordinary tools and easily available materials.
2. They are traditional symbols of Christmas, and, we believe, in good taste.

Although enough instruction is given to enable you to construct each project, the designs of many of the projects are adaptable, so that you can simplify or elaborate the plans as your imagination and skills allow.

### ENLARGING AND TRANSFERRING PATTERNS FOR CUTOUTS

By the use of the graphing method, any pattern or picture

of reasonable complexity can be increased in size to the dimensions you desire and traced on to an enlarged pattern or on to the material you are using to build the cutout. There are several methods of doing this, and the method you choose will depend quite a bit on how complicated the picture is that you want to enlarge (and probably on how good an artist you are).

For simple designs such as the face of Santa shown in Figure 17 you need only a ruler and a sheet of plain paper large

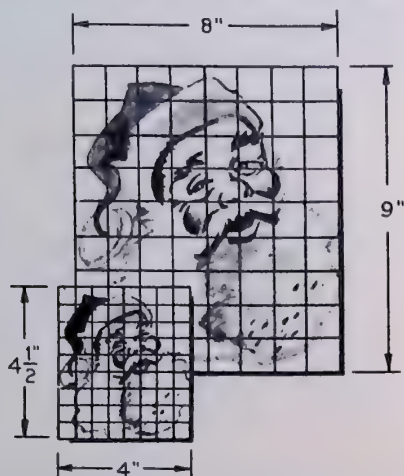


Figure 17. *A simple method by which a picture can be enlarged and transferred.*

enough to accommodate the increased dimensions you desire. Let us say that the Santa face you are going to trace measures 4 inches across and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches long. You want a cutout 8 inches across and 9 inches long, or four times the size of the original in over-all area.

On the Santa face you are copying, draw a square-cornered frame large enough to include all the detail of the picture and whose dimensions are easily divisible or multiplied; in this

example, the frame would measure 4 inches across and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches long. Now draw in vertical and horizontal lines, as shown in the lower left of Figure 17, so that all the boxes are squares.

The more squares you make, the more accurate and easy will be the job of transferring the pattern on to your enlargement. In our example we have drawn  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch squares, so that we have a frame 8 squares across and 9 squares long, as shown in Figure 17. Now on a large sheet of paper, lay out a square-cornered frame to the dimensions you want the cutout to be; in our project, the frame will be 8 inches wide and 9 inches long (the size of our cutout). Now draw a grid into the frame so that you have exactly the same number of squares as you had in the "frame" on the original picture, that is, 8 squares wide by 9 squares long. That means that each square in the larger frame will be 1 inch.

Into each square of the larger frame draw the detail of the Santa face that appears in the corresponding square of the smaller frame. If you are not sure of your copying ability, you can use a method of first plotting points on the enlargement and then connecting the points. When you are finished you should have a pretty faithful reproduction.

The pattern can then be traced on to masonite, external plywood, wallboard, or any other serviceable outdoor material. Rough-saw it to shape first with a hand saw and then use a coping saw to cut to the actual outline. Weatherproof paint should be used for painting the cutout, using the colors of the picture you copied.

#### A MORE ELABORATE PATTERN

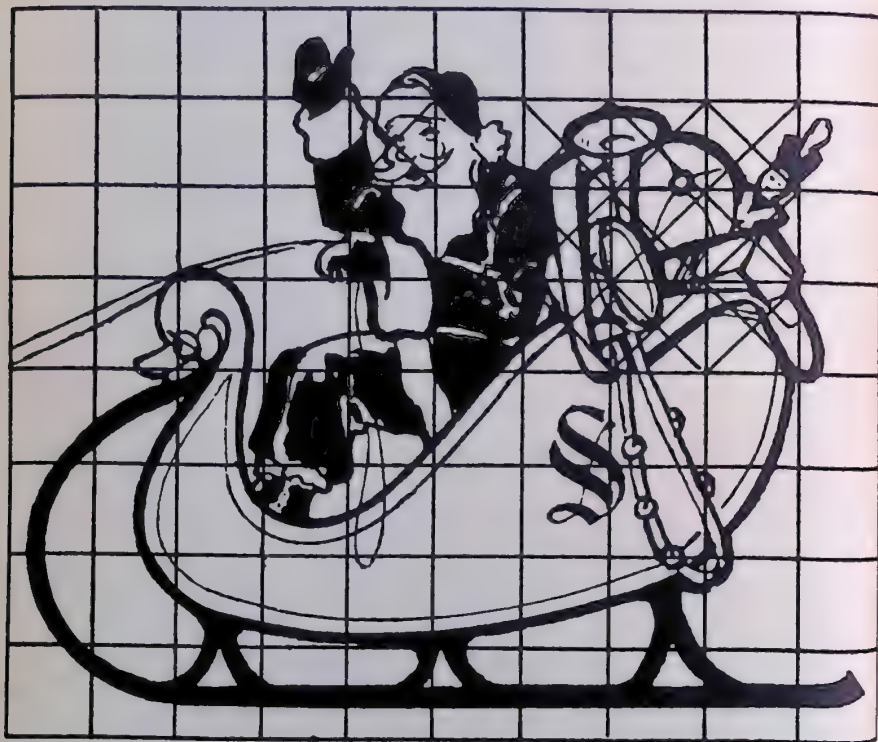
If you have the enlarging method just described firmly in mind, you can attempt more complicated jobs by the addition of diagonal lines to the horizontal and vertical lines of the simple grid. In this manner you will have a much greater number of lines intersecting the detail of your picture, and

the needed greater accuracy for transferring the detail is obtained.

Let us use this method to make the wonderful cutouts of Santa's sleigh and his reindeer shown in Figure 18.\* In Figure 18, there is shown a drawing of Santa in his sleigh with his bagful of toys and also a drawing of one of his reindeer. On

\* The full-size patterns ready for tracing this project on  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch plywood or wallboard can be obtained from Mastercraft Plans, 7041 Olcott Avenue, Chicago 31, Illinois.

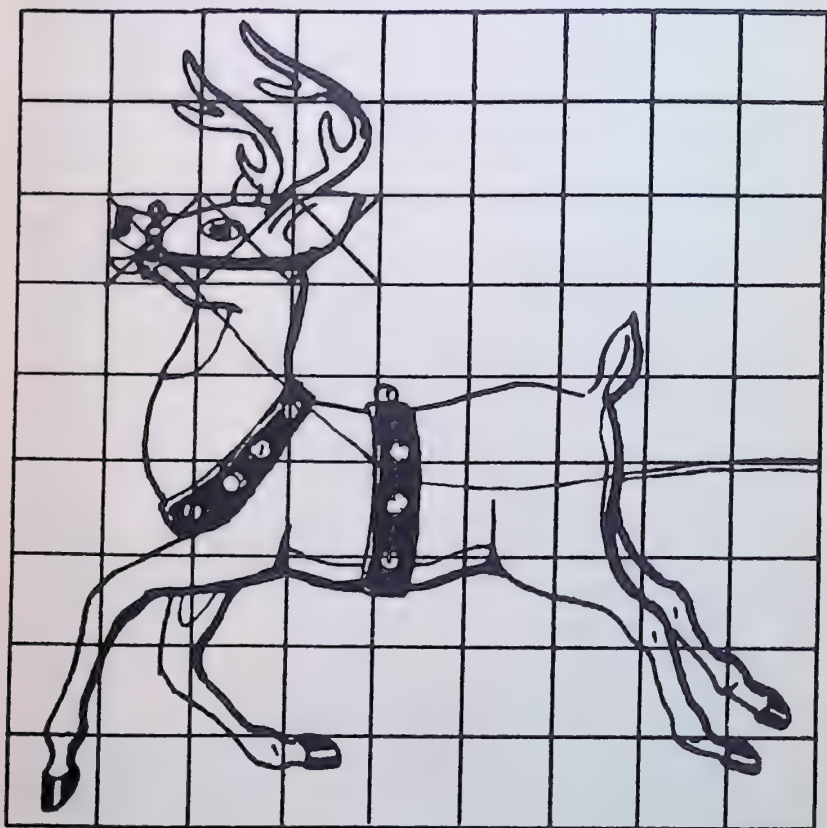
Figure 18. *Santa and his reindeer framed in grid lines ready for enlargement and copying.*





the drawings we have imposed a grid of horizontal, vertical, and diagonal lines. You will notice that diagonal lines have been added wherever the detail becomes complicated, as, for example, in Santa's bag full of toys. By this process of subdivision, the complicated detail can be covered by more lines so that the detail is intersected at enough points to make transferring the drawing feasible.

The Santa should be cut out from a 4 foot by 5 foot panel of exterior  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch plywood or wallboard. On a large enough



sheet of paper, which will serve as a template for making the full-sized cutout, lay out the identical grid made on the small drawing, using the dimensions of the enlargement. If, for example, you used a frame 10 squares across and 8 squares high on the drawing, each a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch square, as in Figure 18, you should use the same number for your enlargement. This means that you will have a frame 4 feet by 5 feet on your large sheet of paper, with 6-inch squares. Remember that the number of squares in the frame of your enlargement should always be the same as the number in the frame of the picture you are copying.

Now draw in the detail of the drawing on to the corresponding squares of the enlargement. Once you have transferred the detail pattern of the Santa, you can do the same for his reindeer on another large sheet of paper. Now trace the details from the enlargements on to panels of  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch plywood or wallboard.

The outlines can then be rough-sawed to shape, cutting about one inch away from the actual outline with a hand or compass saw. The cutting to the actual outline should be done with a coping saw, unless you are fortunate enough to have a power jig saw in your workshop.

The horns of the reindeer should be made separately to enable you to saw them more easily and to prevent them from breaking in the process. The horns are fastened to the reindeer with 1" x 2" x 5" cleats as shown in Figure 19b.

You can make more than one reindeer simply by using your enlarged pattern to trace on to other panels the detail and sawing to shape.

#### PAINTING CUTOUTS

Use outdoor paint; oil paints or enamels are recommended. The table (p. 37) indicates a general color scheme that can be used to make the cutout of Santa and his reindeer an eye-filling attraction. In order to avoid running the colors into

one another, paint adjoining color sections at different times, that is, paint all the red parts, then the white parts, and so on. Allow enough time for the paint to set in one particular color area before you paint adjacent sections of different colors. A good idea is to block out the areas of color on your panels of plywood or wallboard and label them as to color. Thus you will be able to visualize the painted figures and also work out a painting plan, using the suggestions given here as a guide.

You will need white, red, and green paint, with small cans of brown, yellow, and black. Mix a little white and red to give you the pink.

After you have painted in all the colors, and the paint has dried thoroughly, give the entire cutout two coats of clear spar varnish on both front and back surfaces. Be sure that the edges of the cutout have been completely sealed with both paint and varnish. Otherwise moisture might penetrate the material and spoil a good painting job.

## SANTA

White and red cap	Red mouth
Pink face	Pink lip
White eyebrows	Red suit and mittens with
Eyes white with black	white cuffs
pupils	Brown shoes with yellow eye-
White mustache and beard	lets and black laces

## SANTA'S BAG

Red, white, yellow sections on the *ball* with black dot in middle

Yellow *horn*

*Toy soldier*

Pink face

White plume

Yellow band on black hat

Red uniform with black collar

*Gift boxes* in white with red ribbon

*Brown bag*

*Red and white drum*, with outside bands brown and inside bands yellow

*Yellow bells* on red strap

SANTA'S SLEIGH

Black runners

Outside outline of sleigh body in green with inside outline in yellow

Sleigh body in green

DUCK

Eyelid red, pink eyeball and black pupil

Yellow beak

Green head

Red jaw

White breast (serves as front of sleigh)

AREAS BETWEEN RUNNERS IN WHITE

DEER

White body and legs

Red harness with yellow bells

Black hooves

Yellow antlers

Brown-bordered white ears

White head

Pink eye with white pupil

Eye bordered in black

Black ring with red strap and yellow bells

Red nose

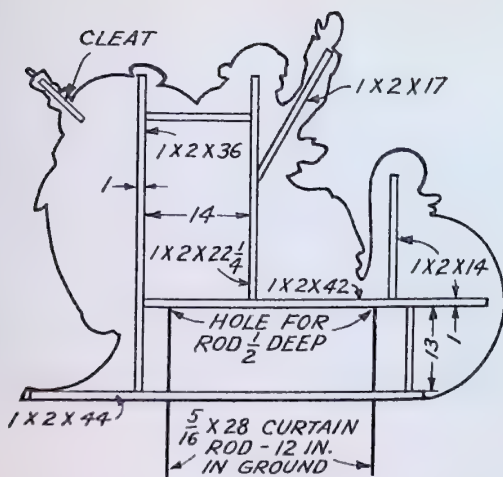
Brown and white tail

MONOGRAM ON SLEIGH

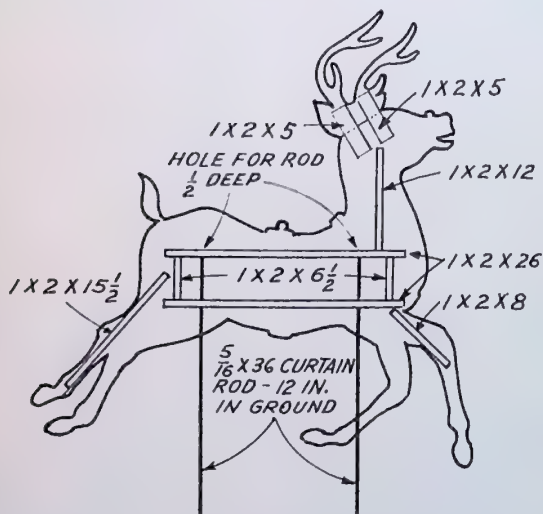
Yellow with black outline

*Note:* Black lining  $\frac{1}{8}$ " wide should be used to separate the colors. This lining will emphasize your color scheme and enhance the over-all appearance of the figures.





(a)



(b)

Figure 19. How to brace and mount Santa and reindeer to give the appearance of flight in mid-air.

## MOUNTING CUTOUTS

Santa and his four reindeer (or fewer, if you so choose) can be mounted in several ways to make an eye-arresting display. They can be mounted on a fairly flat surface or by attaching the unit to a chimney or to other parts of the roof structure. They may be tied to a porch railing, or they can be set up on a lawn. They may also be suspended between two trees or a tree and the house by means of a rope or wire. A most effective method of mounting which gives the illusion of flight is to

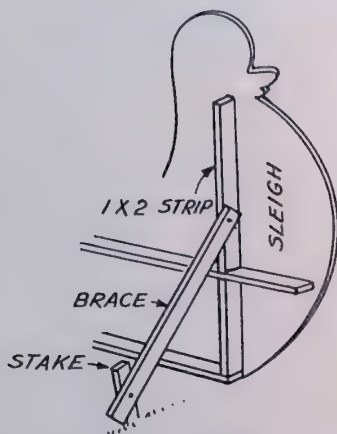


Figure 20. *How to brace and mount for lawn display.*

support the figures in mid-air by means of curtain rods as shown in Figures 19a and 19b.

The figures should be well braced. In Figure 19a, the detail of bracing and supporting the Santa and sleigh is also shown. Figure 19b shows the support and brace plan for the reindeer. The bracing consists of several pieces of 1 inch x 2 inch lumber nailed edgewise against the back of the figure. The position of the braces should be first marked out on the back of the cutout so that small holes can be drilled through to

locate where the nails are to be driven from the front. Additional pieces of bracing lumber can be added if so required. If the cutouts are to be used on a lawn or flat roof or other flat surfaces, braces may be screwed to the strips to provide support, as shown in Figure 20.

Screw eyes may be attached to the strips for suspending the figures on a rope or wire.

Floodlamps and spotlamps can be used to make this cutout of Santa and his reindeer a thing of illuminated beauty. White light on color is always safest and in this project is recommended.

#### PROJECTING METHOD OF TRANSFERRING PATTERNS

If you have a projector make a slide from your picture and project it to the size desired on a large sheet of paper. Trace in the detail, transfer it to a panel of plywood or wallboard, and you are ready to start sawing. Or you can project the detail directly on the cutout material itself and draw in the detail.

#### MORE METHODS OF MOUNTING CUTOUTS

Besides the detailed instructions for mounting the Santa and reindeer already given, there are several other methods that can be used to mount cutouts.

If you hesitate to nail into your roof, make a 1 inch x 2 inch or a 2 inch x 4 inch wooden saddle to fit over the peak or ridge of the roof. The legs of the saddle should be at least twice as long as the cutout is high. The weight of the saddle usually is sufficient to support the cutout, but if added weight is needed, sand bags on both legs of the saddle can be attached. Guy ropes and wires should be rigged to give added support.

If the cutout is to be set up on the slope of the roof, you can nail one-inch board supports to the roof boards at the ends of the gable. These supports can then be nailed to the back of the cutout.

Cutouts can be fastened securely to the chimney without

chipping the brick or mortar with nails or screws by building a 1 inch x 2 inch board collar which slides down over the chimney and to which is fastened the cutout. One-inch plumber strap or metal banding material can also be used to make the collar, which is then fastened to the cutout.

Cutouts for the yard, of course, can be fastened to a flat board whose one end is sharpened and driven into the ground. Or a brace can be made and sandbags used to weight the brace down.

### SOME MORE CUTOUT PROJECTS

#### ANGEL AND CHOIR BOY

Figures 21 and 22 show two more delightful cutouts that can be made rather easily. The stylized Santa can be mounted on the chimney or set up on a lawn. The choir boy and angel are made to hold music books. Both of these figures are constructed from exterior grade plywood with the different elements, such as Santa's mustache and the choir boy's hands, cut out as separate pieces and fastened to the main body of the cutout.

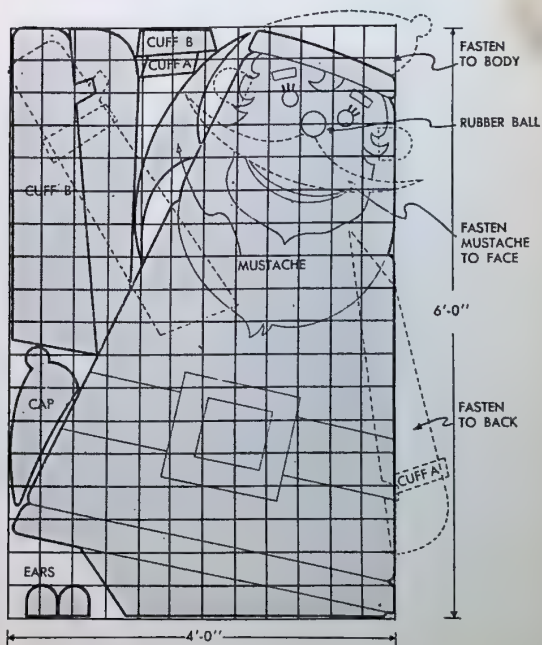
#### MAKING LIGHTED CUTOUTS

To wire cutouts with lamps, staple the wire with electrician's insulated staples to the back of the cutout and drill holes around the outer perimeter of the figure large enough to hold the lamp sockets. Figure 23 shows the wiring and installation of an angel cutout wired for light. If you use lamps on a string, you may have difficulty in seating the sockets in the holes because of the socket's flange and the attached wire. If this is the case, try the following trick. To accommodate the wire of the sockets, saw a slot the width of the saw kerf from the perimeter into the hole. Then, sliding the wire through the slot, you can pull the socket firmly into the hole. If you use pin-type sockets, you won't have to worry about this dif-





Figure 21. *A stylized Santa Claus cutout and plans for making him.*



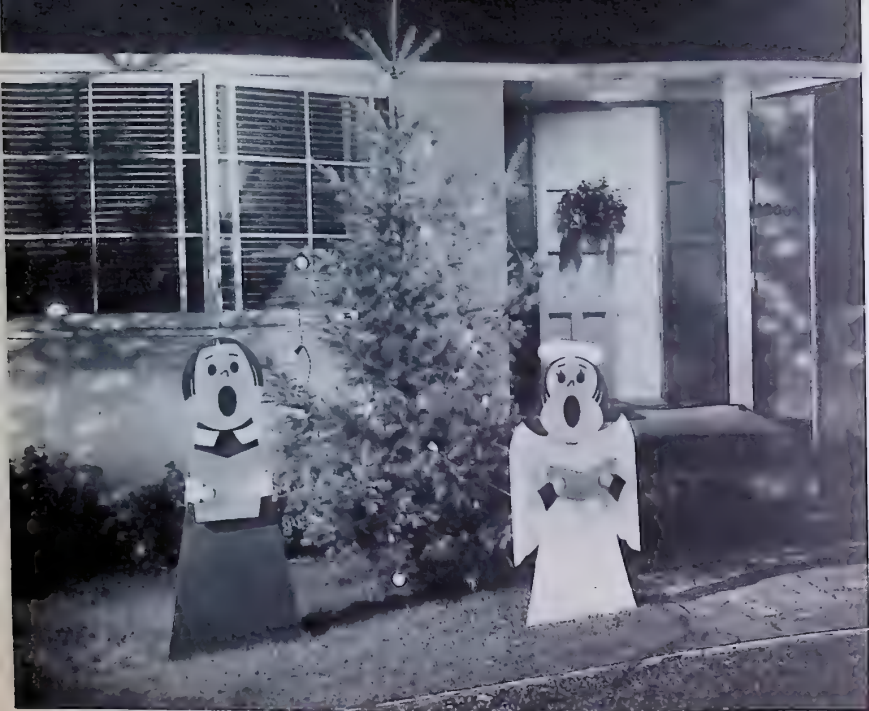


Figure 22. Angel and choir boy singing Christmas carols. It's a good idea to give them "voice" by connecting an outdoor amplifier to your record player. The plans for making the angel and choir boy are also shown.

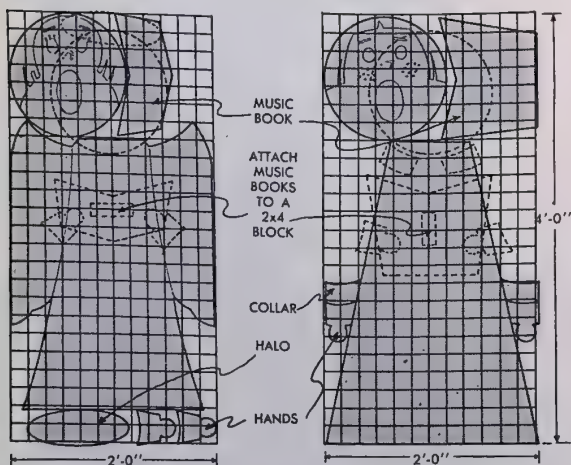




Figure 23. *Wiring and installing a lighted cutout.*

ficulty since the wire is attached after the sockets are seated.

Fit the sockets into the holes securely and screw in colored C-9½, C-7½, or S-11 lamps. Space the lamps no more than 3 inches apart if the form is 1 foot high, 6 inches apart if the figure is 2 feet high, and so on.

The new aluminum strip method of lighting described on p. 24 is easily adaptable to the job of lighting cutout figures.

#### MAKING LIGHTED STARS

Besides the many kinds of stars readily bought in stores, you can design very attractive ones with the aluminum strips that come wired ready for use, with pin-type sockets, or with 25-watt colored or clear bulbs in ordinary household porcelain sockets. Metal foil, fiber glass material, greens, or translucent material such as cel-o-glas can be used to add to the glitter and beauty of stars.

The lighted star shown in Figure 24 is made of composition board and crinkled foil, as shown in the diagram. Notice how the star is made on two planes to give it depth. To the larger board a household-sized socket is installed to hold the colored lamp. Paint all surfaces of the star white to reflect the greatest amount of light from the 25-watt bulb. Then cover with

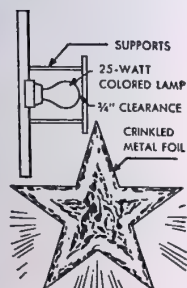


Figure 24. *Making your own lighted stars.*

crinkled metal foil. A graceful loop of greens lighted with outdoor Christmas bulbs over the doorway and two large candles complete the decorating arrangement.

In Figure 25, stars of various lighting designs and ways of constructing them are shown. From these illustrations you can obtain the basic idea of construction and, from there, you can devise your own designs suited to your tastes and needs.

#### MAKING LIGHTED CANDLES AND CANES

The warm, cheery glow of lighted candles flanking a doorway or placed artfully in flower boxes or on the door itself is as symbolic of Christmas as any decoration you can imagine. Or the innocent gaiety of red and white peppermint canes often is just the refreshing note needed to remind us that Christmas is a season for children.



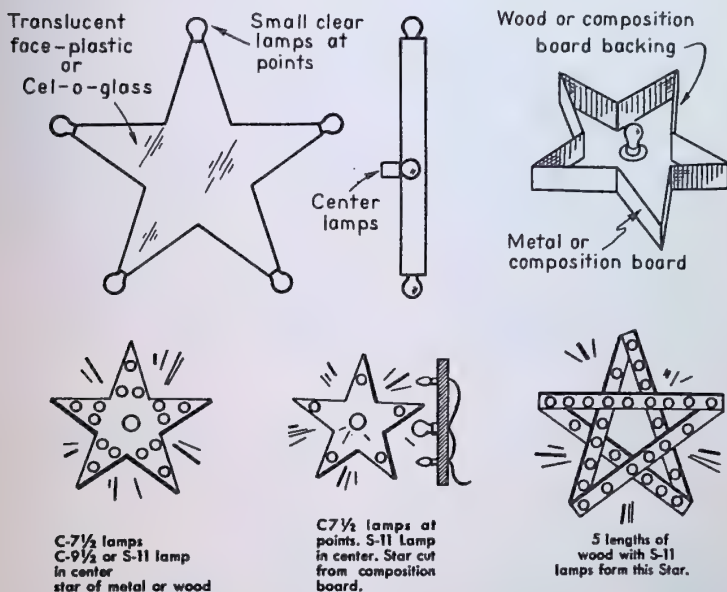


Figure 25. Construction detail for more lighted stars.

In (a) of Figure 26, the candle is made from a cylinder of diffusing plastic material attached to two circular wooden disks, top and bottom. Inside the cylinder an outdoor string of lights is placed. A 25-watt lamp is screwed into a household-sized socket that has been attached to the top wooden disk to give light to the flame of the candle. The flame itself is made of a wire frame covered with muslin or oilcloth.

In (b) the same general idea is modified. Instead of the Christmas tree lamps, a spotlight is placed at the base of the candle, and an opening is left at the top so that the flame will also be lighted.

In (c) of Figure 26 candles that can be constructed very simply are shown. The one on the left is made from iron

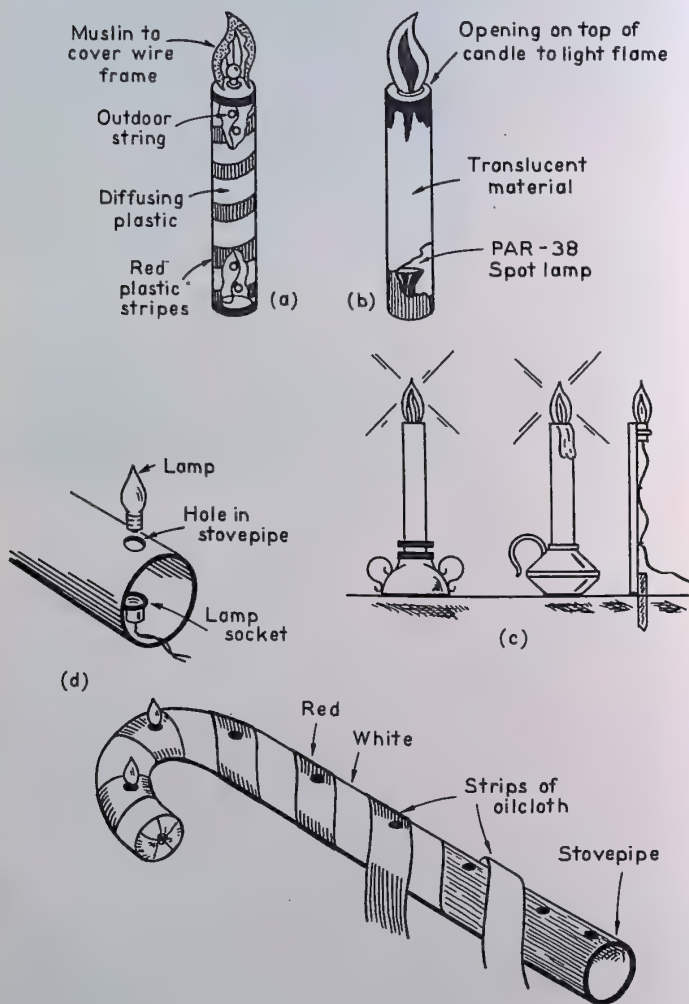


Figure 26. *Making your own candles and candy cane.*

water pipe (or you can use a mailing tube) stuck in a crock or jug with a standard outdoor socket wired in the pipe and a colored bulb inserted to act as the flame. On the right, a simple single-bulb candle is cut from a 1" board, painted appropriately, and wired as shown in the back. This type of candle can be attached to a wedge that can be driven into the ground, as shown at the right. Or a candle holder cutout can be made and fastened at the base of the candle, as shown at the left.

For a candy cane, lengths of ordinary rainspout or stove-pipe can be used to form the shape of the cane (Figure 26d). The peppermint stripes can be made by wrapping spirals of red and white oilcloth around the pipe. Equally spaced holes can then be drilled in the stovepipe to hold various colored Christmas lamps.

Lighted plastic canes and candles already wired are available, of course, in stores during the Season.

#### MAKING LIGHTED BELLS

There are many ways of making your own bells using a variety of materials. Some novel ideas are presented in Figure 27 with details of construction. Bells may be cut in one plane

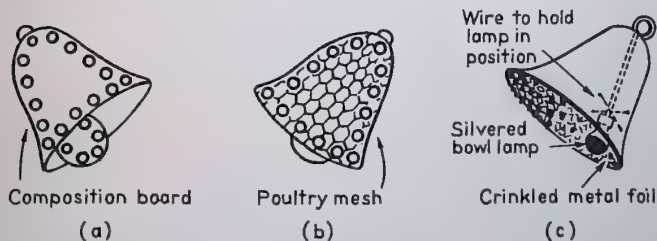


Figure 27. *Making your own lighted bells.*

from composition board and studded with lights as shown in (a), or a dimensional bell can be fashioned from poultry mesh and lights attached as in (b). Cover the wire, of course, with

material, either metal foil or evergreen sprigs. In (c) a lighted clapper in the form of a silvered bowl lamp is used. The outer part of the bell is covered with smooth metal foil, while the inner part is decorated with crinkled metal foil.

#### MAKING LIGHTED ARTIFICIAL TREES

Making tree cutouts is a simple job that should be especially appealing if you have no evergreens or shrubs on your lawn that you can decorate. Again, hardboard, wallboard, masonite, or plywood can be used to cut out the tree shape. Chicken wire can be stapled to the cutout and the frame can then be filled in with evergreen branches to give a realistic effect.

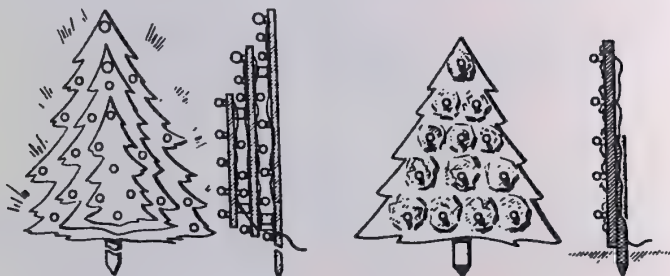


Figure 28. *Making your own artificial Christmas trees.*

Colored lights and ornaments can make your artificial tree a match for any natural evergreen.

The multiplane tree shown in Figure 28 makes a striking display. Also shown in Figure 28 is the single-plane tree. Both are about six feet tall and are mounted on a sharpened peg which can be driven into the ground. Paint the backs of the multiplane tree white to give maximum reflection from the concealed lamps. Use C-9½ or S-11 lamps. For greater sparkle on the single-plane tree, cut out reflectors from foil or tin and place them around the lamps. Keep them away, however, from the metal shell of the lamp sockets.



## MAKING LIGHTED SIGNS

The cheery greeting of a sign is a traditional symbol of Christmas. The materials you use are only limited by your imagination and by the requirement that they be weather resistant. Figure 29 shows a number of ways of making signs and wiring them for light. In (a) the sign is made by constructing a box of  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch board, with a flange or groove cut to hold glass, as shown in the cross-sectional diagram. Glass painted white is then inserted into the groove. Letters may be painted or pasted on the glass. Inside the box, household-type

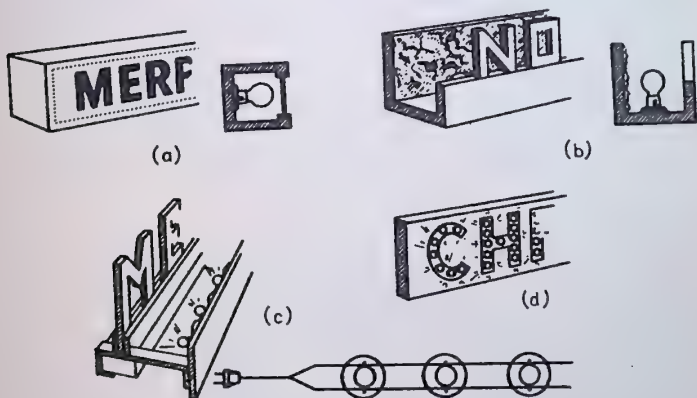


Figure 29. *Making your own lighted Christmas signs.*

porcelain sockets are mounted about 6 inches apart. Colored lamps, preferably all of one color, and about 25-watt size, are screwed into the sockets. The inside of the box should be painted white for greater reflectivity. The sign can then be mounted on a lawn or fitted with screw eyes for hanging.

In (b) of Figure 29, the letters of the sign are cut from composition board and fastened to the front board. The back board is covered with crinkly metallic foil. Colored lamp bulbs in porcelain sockets are fastened to the bottom board in much

the same manner as the sign described in the previous paragraph and as shown in the cross-sectional diagram.

Another method of making a sign is shown in (c) of Figure 29. Wooden strips form a channel for the letters which are cut from composition board and fitted snugly into the channel. Paint the letters white, and string a set of S-11 red lamps to the wooden baffle at the rear, which also acts to conceal the lamps. The sign can be mounted on a porch railing with plumber's strap.

In (d), a sign is shown which can be simply constructed by drilling holes to the shape of the letters and inserting pin-type sockets with colored lights.

#### MAKING LIGHTED WREATHS

The making of wreaths is discussed fully on pages 108-111, *The Home Indoors*. However, in this section we have included the making of two lighted wreaths that are especially attractive for outdoor use.

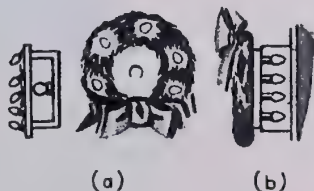


Figure 30. *Making your own lighted Christmas wreath.*

In Figure 30a, a "dimensional" wreath is shown. It is made from a doughnut-shaped wood frame that has been drilled for holes to secure the sockets of a string of C-7½ colored lamps. Evergreen sprigs are then stapled to the frame. A 25-watt colored lamp is screwed into a household-type socket mounted in the center of the wood support behind the frame.

Figure 30b shows an "indirect lighting" type of door wreath. The wreath frame is braced out from the door with

chicken wire or wood blocks. The lamps are fastened to the back of the wreath so that they point to the door. Make sure, however, that the lamps do not touch the door.

The use of both a large lighted wreath and a candle makes a decorative unit that will provide a fascinating center of interest for your outdoor scheme. As shown in the drawing in Figure 31, the frame of the wreath can be made of wood strapping about two and one-half inches wide. The diameter of the wreath is 41 inches and each side of this octagon is 18 inches long. However, you may want to design your wreath to a size better suited to your own house.

Before you add the evergreens and lights to the wreath, paint the frame a dark green to harmonize with the natural color of the greens. Then you can tape on lamps on a string and fasten greenery to complete the wreath. A red oil-cloth bow can be added for accent.

The half-cylinder candle in the center of the wreath was covered with translucent shower curtain material in plain white. As shown in the diagram the candle is fashioned over a simple frame of coat hanger wire with wooden half disks attached top and bottom. A porcelain socket at top holds the flame-shaped bulb and a piece of plastic material cut into the shape of a halo can be fastened behind the flame bulb. A regular 25-watt household bulb can be screwed into the porcelain socket at the bottom to light up the candle. Notice how a little door is provided at the bottom of the candle to allow convenient access to the lower bulb.

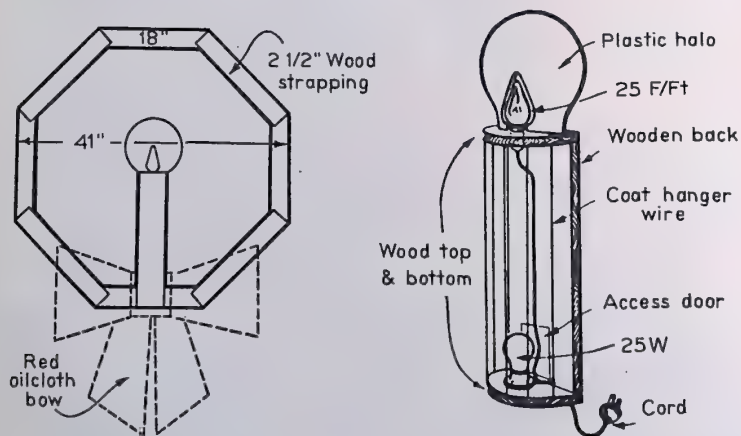



Figure 31. *A lighted candle inside a wreath.*



# 4

## *Let's Put Our Decorations in an Outdoor Christmas Setting*



We have familiarized ourselves with outdoor Christmas materials and lighting equipment, we have fixed in our minds some fundamental ideas on good design and outdoor lighting techniques, and we have tried our hand at making our own decorative units. Equipped with this information, and aware of safety and the practice of simple precautions, we can now turn to transforming our home outdoors into a Christmas fairyland aglow with light and color.

In this section, ideas on decorating the various parts of the home and grounds outdoors will be presented. In putting these ideas into practice for your own place, however, don't be constrained to follow them exactly. Most of them allow much room for modification, and you may want to elaborate on, or even simplify, the details of the over-all decoration, according to your own tastes and needs.

Remember, you are working from a decorating plan that you are devising for your own home, a plan that should serve your own needs and satisfactions over a period of years and that will give you the most effective results at a minimum of cost.

### DECORATING YOUR TREES AND YOUR LAWN

The beauty of a snow-laden evergreen tree against a starry backdrop of a Christmas night sky is a breath-taking sight indeed. Such a sight inspired the first lighted Christmas tree in the tradition as we know it. And from this combination of beauty, we can recognize the two basic elements that make a decorated Christmas tree outdoors a delightful thing to see—symmetry and mood, created by the use of light, color, and ornaments.

#### TREE SYMMETRY

If your trees and shrubbery are lopsided, you need not feel discouraged in your plans to use them in the Christmas decorating scheme outdoors. They can be turned into symmetrical beauties with a few tricks of lighting, without inter-



Figure 32. *Adding symmetry to an "ugly duckling" evergreen tree with the use of Christmas tree lights.*

fering with their natural lines and without using one snip of the pruning shears.

Figure 32 shows in diagram form the "before" and "after"

of an "ugly duckling" tree. To begin the process of transformation, fasten screw eyes to two narrow pieces of wood. Now, as shown at the left of Figure 32, tie the pieces firmly in place with tape to the upper part of the tree trunk. As shown in the next drawing, string wires from the screw eyes to the ground in a cone shape and fasten them securely with wooden pegs driven into the ground. Then fasten strings of outdoor Christmas lights to the wires rather than to the branches of your tree. As shown in the drawing (extreme right, Figure 32) more lights can then be arranged in graceful loops, merely by draping the strings horizontally over the wire frame. This technique can also be used on well-shaped trees to accent their symmetry.

The lighted evergreen tree in Figure 33 shows how stringing the lights in a conical pattern emphasizes the towering symmetry of a large tree. It is worth noticing, too, how the tree adds depth to the over-all outdoor decorative scheme.

Figure 33. *The frosty beauty of an outdoor lighted tree.*



## SOME TREE-LIGHTING KNOW-HOW

In order to enhance the lovely natural green of an ever-green tree, a green color cap placed over a floodlight or spotlight should be used. Any other color cap, such as yellow or red used alone, will tend to "wash out" and distort the natural color of the tree.

However, a combination of red and blue, or blue and yellow, floodlamps placed opposite each other on each side of a tree that is set against a white background can give you some striking effects. First, you will get the impression of three trees because of the shadows cast on the white background. The shadows themselves will be of different colors. However, where the colored light from the lamps blends on the tree, the effect is of white light, and the natural green of the tree will be retained. This is because the primary colors combine to produce white. However, you must use these colors in proper proportion to achieve these effects. Two blue or green lamps are required to every yellow or red lamp used. Of course, on the sides of the tree where all the colors do not mix you will get color effects that tend to "wash out" the green of the tree. But you can counteract this by placing appropriately colored tree lamps at these places.

Another interesting lighting effect can be obtained by silhouetting in color a well-shaped tree on a white background. Aim a floodlamp of a warm color, such as orange or yellow, against a white background and use cool colors, such as green or blue, on the tree itself by placing floodlamps low and concealed near the tree.

In using strings of lights, the order of brightness of lamps is: white, orange, red, green, and blue. Therefore if you use all colors in lighting the tree, you should have roughly twice as many blue and green lamps as you do white, orange, and red, in order to have a good color and brightness balance. In this manner you will also be acting to retain the true color of the tree.



For the number of Christmas tree lamps you should put on a tree, here is a formula you can use.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{No. of lamps required} &= \text{No. of lamps per sq. ft.} \\ &\quad \times \text{height of tree} \\ &\quad \times \text{width of tree (at base)} \\ &\quad \times 1\frac{1}{2} \end{aligned}$$

The table below indicates the number of lamps needed per square foot to obtain a certain effect:

<i>To Get</i>	<i>No. of Lamps Required per Sq. Ft.</i>
Solid effect .....	2
Tree's outline .....	1
Spotty effect .....	$\frac{1}{2}$

Thus, for a tree 4 feet wide and 6 feet high, to get a solid effect you will need:

$$2 \times 6 \times 4 \times 1\frac{1}{2} = 72 \text{ lamps}$$

Figure 34. *Even deciduous trees can be lighted for Christmas display. Notice also the straight-line effect of the front hedge.*





Figure 35. *Foundation shrubbery aglow with Christmas lighting.*

#### CREATING A MOOD

If you are partial to the frosty blue-white brilliance of a Christmas tree, use cool colors with light-catching elements. All blue lamps with white accents on an evergreen tree have an ethereal loveliness hard to match, especially if some of the white is provided by snow. White lamps on a tree used in combination with green or blue lamps also act to define the tree's shape more clearly.

On the other hand, you may like the golden glitter of a tree with all yellow lamps.

Or you may be the type that likes stimulating colors. Red and orange lamps used alone, however, tend to make the green foliage look unnatural, so use a floodlamp with a blue or green color cap. If you use the entire range of colored lamps, remember the order of brightness given before and use the colors in proper proportion.

As ornaments, you can try strings of red cranberries and white popcorn to give a natural-looking decoration to outdoor evergreen trees. The birds will appreciate it, too. Large, colored Christmas tree balls can be used to decorate the tree,

but let one color dominate, perhaps silver or red. Bells that tinkle in the wind are also attractive tree ornaments. Reflectors made from household aluminum foil will add sparkle if attached to the light sockets. Keep them away from the inside shell of the sockets, however.

Deciduous trees can also be lighted so that they add to the lighting effectiveness of your scheme. Notice how in Figure 34 the two deciduous trees at the extreme ends of the lawn act to frame and unify the entire lighting decoration. You will need more lights and larger ones than those you use for evergreens. If you fasten the wires so that they follow the natural contour of the branches, you will get a pleasing lighting arrangement.

#### DECORATE YOUR SHRUBBERY AND HEDGES

Shrubbery can be lighted by adapting many of the ideas given above. Figure 35 shows a nice treatment of foundation shrubbery, where the lights are placed on the shrubs themselves, and floodlamps are used for general illumination and to accent the brick texture of the house. In addition, however,

Figure 36. *A lawn display festive and bright with the Christmas joy of Santa and his reindeer.*



you can silhouette and light your foundation shrubbery by placing a string of tree lights, all of one color, near the foundation of the house or garage and erecting a shield of board or sheet metal between the lamps and the shrubs. The shield need be only high enough to conceal the lamps and to throw the light up against the wall.

For hedges, strings of lights are very effective. Notice how in Figure 34 the hedges are outlined in a precise line of light.

#### DECORATE YOUR LAWN

Besides decorating the evergreens on a lawn, the lawn itself can be made a center of interest by the use of interesting cutouts.



Figure 37. *The effectiveness of this lawn display can be heightened with "singing" from an outdoor amplifier connected to your record player.*

A string of handsome reindeer pulling Santa in his gift-filled sleigh is a familiar sight, but one that never fails to open



a child's eyes with wonder; especially if the eyes of the animals and Santa himself blink on and off. Figure 36 shows this fascinating display on the lawn.

Figure 37 shows a simpler display—carolers standing by a home-made lamp post and spotlighted by a PAR 38 projector lamp. This decorative unit can be made even more charming by setting up an outdoor amplifier for your record player and, at intervals, playing the familiar and beloved Christmas carols.



Figure 38. *Creches make ideal lawn displays. A Madonna bends over the Babe in the manger in an adoring attitude. Off to the left stands Joseph, staff in hand. In a kneeling position are the shepherds looking in awe and reverence at the Nativity. The Magi approach from the right, bearing gifts. Angels hovering above make the scene complete.*

Creches can make a lawn the center of attraction in your lighting scheme. Figure 38 shows a Nativity scene, home-constructed, and lighted quite effectively by two projector lamps.

## OUTDOOR WINDOW MAGIC

To the passerby on a Yuletide wintry night, there is no part of a house more appealing than the window that, glowing with light, spills out into the chilly blackness the warm hospitality of Christmas.

The variations in treatment of windows are almost as numerous as there are people who decorate them. Windows, especially picture windows, have the versatility of a stage and can reflect any mood or setting that you, the stage manager, desire. They can serve simply as a window to show off the festive interior of your home (Figure 39) or to frame the decorated Christmas tree inside. Or they can be the locale for unusual decoration in your outdoor lighting scheme.

In this part of the book, we shall consider the window only as it requires some outdoor decoration. In the next part of the book, *The Home Indoors*, there will be presented

Figure 39. *A wall window frame for a cleverly arranged Christmas scene indoors. The frame is accentuated by the use of dark evergreens on each side of the window.*



several more ideas for treating windows which, of course, can also be viewed from outdoors.

Figure 40 shows an ingenious "tree within a tree" deco-



Figure 40. *A "tree within a tree" design makes an outstanding window decoration.*

ration that is sure to attract attention to the window that displays your indoor Christmas tree. This particular treatment is especially applicable to homes that have few shrubs or trees, or none, which can be decorated for the Christmas Season.

As can be seen in the picture, the evergreen festooning is fastened to the side of the house in the shape of a giant tree. Then colored outdoor strings of lamps are entwined around the festooning. The giant "tree" is topped with a suitable-sized star and large Christmas balls are hung inside the "tree."

An alternate idea might be the encircling of the window with a giant wreath of white pine with a big red ribbon on one side. The wreath can be decorated with appropriately sized cutout bells covered with silver and blue metallic foil. Outdoor lamps on a string can be intertwined into the wreath and the whole display can be bathed in the light from a flood-lamp.

Many picture windows can be attractively lighted by using evergreen boughs as a valance around the window and then placing lamps on a string behind the evergreen valance. The window is thus framed in a band of light, through the center of which runs the dark contrast of the evergreens.

Some windows, especially bay windows, can be outlined simply by a string of colored lights. The simplicity of the decoration is strikingly effective. This method also provides a lovely frame for the lighted Christmas tree inside.

Small silhouetted figures such as the Magi riding camels can be mounted on top of a valance of evergreens over a window. Colored lights on a string can then be concealed behind the cutout figures. The cutouts should be painted black, and the wall of the house should, of course, be lighted. The silhouetted effect is very interesting.

The "snowflake" window shown in Figure 41 is easily made and it will dramatically frame your indoor Christmas tree. The top and sides of the outside of the window are outlined with a string of colored outdoor lamps and the lamps are then



covered with crinkled metal foil. Try blue metallic foil for a colorful effect. On the inside of the window, stick the snowflake outlines which can be cut out from paper doilies, napkins, or colored paper. Make the snowflakes king size as shown in the picture.

Figure 42 shows a series of windows attractively treated to form an integrated lighted decoration scheme. The formal balance of the display is carried out with meticulous care. Spotlamps are used to highlight the Madonna and Child plaques set in the centers of the lower windows and in the window above the doorway. These three units are also roped with evergreens. The upper extreme windows are secondary in interest and are lighted simply by indoor lighted candles.



Figure 41. A "snowflake" window that can be created with scissors, colored paper, and some imagination.



Figure 42. *Plaques make lovely window decorations. Notice how proper flood-lighting unifies the decoration.*

#### ROOF AND CHIMNEY LIGHTING FOR SANTA

For the intrepid soul who finds the heights of a roof neither dizzying nor treacherous, Figures 43 and 44 have been included. Cutouts are, of course, the favorite Christmas decoration for the roof, but, as has been pointed out in the Design section, lights used alone can be strung under the eaves and around the gables to outline the roof in a sparkling, colorful display of light. As has also been shown in the Design section, the ingenious use of floodlamps and spotlamps can make the roof of a home an integral part of the lighting scheme.

In Figure 43, the stylized Santa and his reindeer almost seem to leap from the roof above the bay window on to the main roof with the chimney. The cutout was made of  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch exterior fir plywood. With waterproof glue, it was attached to a wooden frame for support. The wooden frame was, in turn, braced and fastened to the side of the house. This display was lighted with a border of outdoor Christmas lights on a string, and a floodlamp was set in the ground below for general illumination.

The cutout is fairly simple to make, since only the suggestion of reindeer forms was sawed, while the detail of the reindeer and Santa in his sleigh was painted in.

Figure 44 shows another cutout display, this time on the roof with the chimney. The sleigh is empty and Santa is ready



Figure 43. Atop a bay window roof, this display makes a striking picture of movement.

Figure 44. A roof display cleverly lighted by projector lamps.



to make his famous trip down the chimney. The display is effectively lighted by floodlamps strategically placed on the roof. Notice the tie-in effect of Junior waiting to surprise Santa as he comes down the chimney and into the fireplace.

The chimney itself can be decorated very attractively by studding it with colored outdoor lamps entwined in natural



Figure 45. *The chimney a-sparkle with light. Notice the home-made candy cane that acts as a lamp holder for the steps in front of the house and the home-made candles that flank the doorway.*

growing ivy or in greenery used especially for the Season. Notice how in Figure 45 the inner lights on the chimney lead the eye to the lighted decoration—a good use of strings to direct the eye to a focal point.



# WALL DECORATION FOR THE HOUSE

Here's an idea for an outdoor Christmas decoration that can be used over and over again. The large outline of a Christmas tree towering in front of the house in the picture shown in Figure 46 was designed in sections on the recreation room floor and erected outdoors in a short period of time.

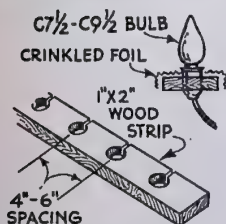


Figure 46. *The wall of the house between windows provides a setting for this glittering stylized Christmas tree.*

As shown in the drawing the tree is formed from wooden strips with holes bored at regular intervals for outdoor lighting sockets. The wood strips are then covered with aluminum foil to create highlights and fastened to a pyramidal shaped support that is attached to the house. (Be sure the foil does not get inside the sockets or touch the base of the lamp.) Atop the tree, which is lighted with green bulbs, is a white star. The star is made as shown in the detail of the drawing. Flood lamps (150 watt) with green color caps bathe the front of the house in soft green light.



Figure 47. *To greet your Christmas guests, a doorway lighted from above and a simple wreath on the door.*

#### HOSPITALITY AT THE DOORWAY

A knock on the door or the tinkle of a bell or chimes during the Yuletide is a happy sound, for Christmas is a time of warm welcome for friends and relatives. How you choose to express your hospitality in your decorating scheme is, of course, a matter of individual preference, but there is no better place to begin than in the decoration you arrange for your front door. Your doorway, too, should be the first unit to be decorated as a part of a year-by-year building plan for decorating the exterior of your home.

The traditional Christmas wreath at the front door will never become "unoriginal," for it is the breath of Christmas itself. On pages 52-53, we have described the making of lighted wreaths, and in the second part of this book we shall give in more detail the making of wreaths, sprays, roping, etc., that need only the illumination of a projector lamp or even the lighting from year-round fixtures to highlight their beauty.

The simple wreath with a bright Christmas red ribbon shown in Figure 47 makes a handsome addition to the architecture of the door. The whole effect is highlighted by a projector floodlamp placed in a swivel-type holder overhead and pointed so that the deep green of the wreath and the red of the ribbon are emphasized in a soft white light.

If the architectural lines of the doorway are such that light directed upward brings out the symmetry of the lines and casts interesting shadows, then try the scheme shown in Figure 48. A more elaborate type of wreath with bronze-hued cones and red bows decorate the door. A trim of evergreen boughs is placed under the cornice of the porch roof and colored lamps on a string are entwined about the evergreens. Two projector floodlamps, concealed behind the two evergreen bushes that flank the doorstep, throw their beams upward and bathe the entire ensemble in an interesting pattern of light and shadow.



Figure 48. *Light directed upward from concealed projector lamps creates interesting outlines for your doorway. A beautiful wreath is highlighted on the door.*

If your doorway is graced on either side by two well-proportioned columnar evergreen trees, complete the picture by framing the door itself with evergreen roping in a



effect. Place two lighted bells tied together with

a bright ribbon over the door so that they direct light on to the doorway. Decorate the evergreen trees and the roping with strings of colored lamps and metal foil ornaments. Then place two floodlamps, one at each side of the doorway, so that the light sparkles on the ornaments and gives general illumination to the entire decorating scheme.

If you have a porch for your front doorway that is upheld by large classic columns, spiral evergreen roping around the



columns. Then continue the roping across the porch front in a graceful swag effect. Where the swags are fastened to the porch beam, suspend appropriately sized lighted bells or stars or snowflakes. Place a well-shaped evergreen spray on the door and light the entire doorway area with an overhead swivel-type floodlamp attached to the porch roof.

For centuries, English holly with its spiky, glossy-green leaves and full red berries has symbolized the spirit of the Christmas Season. Of course, a traditional bouquet of holly sprays tied with silver and red ribbon to your door makes a lovely welcome. But, for a more spectacular use of this time-honored decoration, try the lighting display shown in Figure 49.

First fashion the leaves from a wire framework covered with chicken wire as shown in details (1) and (2) of Figure 50. Then arrange strings of lamps with pin-type sockets on 3-inch to 5-inch centers, depending on the size leaf you want, to form the veins and outlines of the holly leaves as shown in detail (3) of the drawing. To give a realistic effect, use green lamps (C-7½) on the leaves.

Now cover the entire leaf frame with crinkled metal foil, shaping it to the leaf and allowing the lamps to protrude. To secure the foil to the holly leaf, use a larger mesh chicken wire, fastening the wire layers together on 1-inch centers. Three 50-watt bright red bulbs can then be clustered in the center of the leaf arrangement to give the colorful effect of red berries.

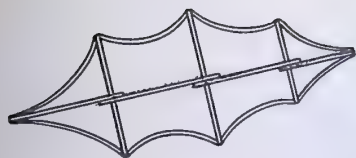
The decorating arrangement can then be completed with lighted candles on each side of the doorway and a pretty evergreen spray on the door itself. In the picture a pair of 40-watt red fluorescent lamps were used as candles, but candles that present fewer wiring difficulties, such as those described on p. 47, can be used instead. Figure 51 shows another arrangement that can be used to display these lovely lighted holly leaves.



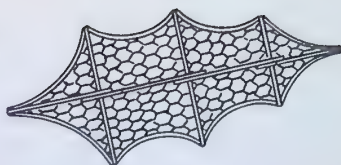
Figure 49. *Lighted home-made holly leaves spark this doorway decoration and make a glistening welcome at the doorway.*

Figure 50. *The "how-to-do-it" of the holly leaves shown in Figure 49.*

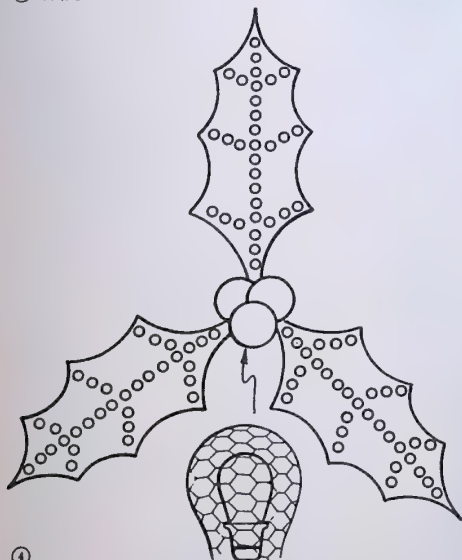
Figure 51. *Featuring holly leaves, icicles, and snow.—————>*



① Wire framework

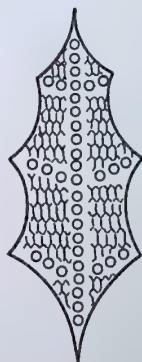


② Framework covered with chicken wire



④

Chicken wire formed in shape of berry with crinkled red cellophane around 50-100W inside frosted bulb in center.



③ Arrange strings with pin-type sockets on 3'' to 5'' centers, depending on scale to form veins and outlines of holly leaves.



Another interesting composition of evergreens and light is shown in Figure 52. Here the flanking windows are brought into the scheme to make an integrated unit with the door. Roping of evergreens is lighted with lamps on a string, and the roping is formed into the shape of a tree about the two windows. The center of interest, however, is the doorway



Figure 52. *Silhouetted beauty over a doorway.*

with a frame of evergreens and a creche of silhouetted figures above the door. A star lighted from behind tops the display. To focus attention on the creche, light is used behind the figures, as well as illumination from a projector lamp placed on the lawn.





Figure 53a. *Chicken wire, some evergreen twigs, and Christmas ornaments make this delightful tree on the door.*

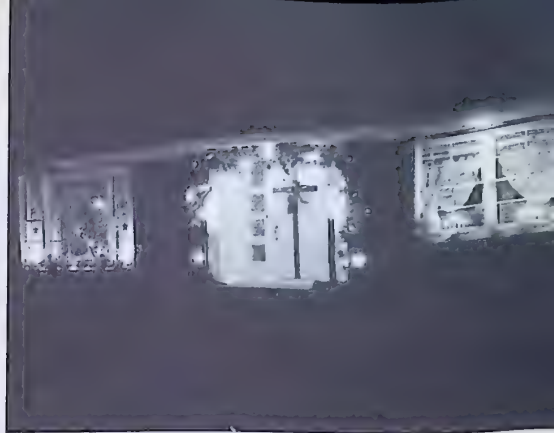


Figure 53b. *A bright band of red ribbon, some greenery, candles, and lights for a doorway.*

#### SOME MORE IDEAS FOR DOORWAY DECORATION

Lighted candles are a lovely addition to a doorway. Many varieties of candles wired for light can be made (see page 47), and how you choose to use them should be suggested by the architectural structure of your doorway. For example, candles graduated in size can accentuate the gable architecture over your doorway and form a fitting base for a star placed directly over the door. Or two candles of identical size and shape can be used to flank a doorway.

Other interesting treatments of the doorway center on the door itself. With the use of casein paints that can be washed off or with the use of cutout patterns that can be fastened easily to a door, you can paint and decorate the door in unusual ways. Your imagination can take over and bring out that latent artistic ability in you. For example, a small Christmas tree made from chicken wire with evergreen sprigs fastened to the wire can decorate the door as shown in Figure 53a. Or wide, bright ribbons can be used to decorate the door so that the door itself becomes a gay Christmas package. Figure 53b shows the use of ribbon on a door to make a lovely cross.



Figure 54. *A walk outlined by electric candlelight.*

#### LIGHT YOUR WALKS AND WINDOWBOXES

Walks can be decorated simply by fastening strings of colored lamps on a wire or rope or by making small individual lighted candles as shown in Figure 54. Incidentally, here is a lighting scheme that takes full advantage of the heavy snow to enhance the decorations.

Windowboxes or flowerboxes can be attractively lighted by anchoring candles of graduated size in the dirt. The candles can be made from wood strips, or other suitable material, 1 inch wide, and painted red or white. A 7-light string is then wired to the candles as shown in the sketch, with one lamp of the string used for the flame of each of the seven candles. Another string of lamps should be used at the base. These are entwined about evergreens which are arranged around the candles. The evergreens themselves can be decorated with bright ornaments to reflect the light.

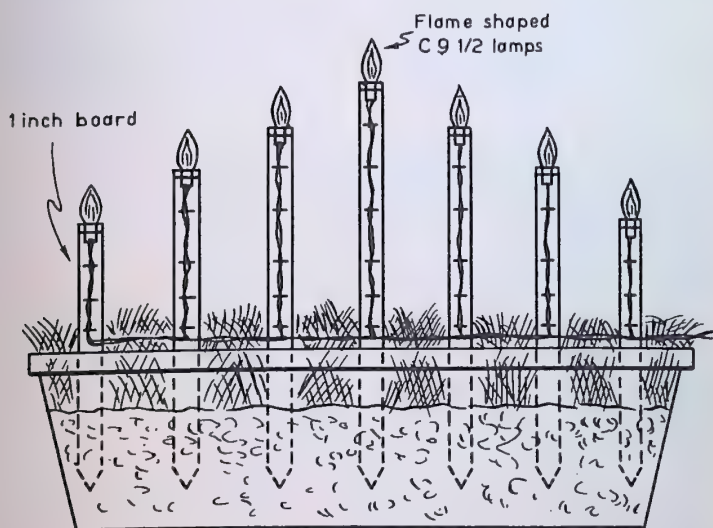


Figure 55. Windowbox lighting.

#### GARAGES—THE MODERN MANGERS

The garage offers a sheltered setting for an outdoor decoration, especially creches. Christmas scenes can be rendered in color on garage doors by using casein paint which can easily be washed off after the Christmas Season. The decorations you choose will depend, of course, upon your taste and, perhaps, your facility with a paint brush or with designing cut-outs.

Reread the section on transferring and enlarging patterns, and you should have little trouble laying out on your garage door a pattern that can be painted in. To get the vertical lines of your grid on the wall or door, use a plumb bob with a chalked string. By snapping the string sharply against the surface, the vertical lines of the grid will be obtained.

Garages and breezeways can also be simply decorated with colored lights and evergreens as is shown in Figure 56.

By using two huge candles as shown in Figure 57, the driveway can be brought into the decorating scheme. Lights can be strung to outline the driveway as well as the walks.



Figure 56. *A simple but attractive way to decorate the garage and breezeway with lights, greenery, a sign, and a small cutout.*


Figure 57. *Lighted candles show the way to an arriving guest in his car.*





# 5

## *Join in the Fun of a Christmas Lighting Contest*



Contests for residential outdoor lighting decorations during the Christmas Season are becoming more and more widespread every year. For those who like to enter these contests, we have included in this section some prize-winning Christmas lighting ensembles and some tips on what the judges will probably look for.

### WHAT THE JUDGES LOOK FOR

Judging of residential competitions is usually based mainly on general artistic effect of the outdoor display plus originality and ingenuity in utilizing existing surroundings. Other factors that may be considered are conformity of the decorations to the Christmas spirit and the eye-filling appeal produced by the size or elaborateness of the displays.

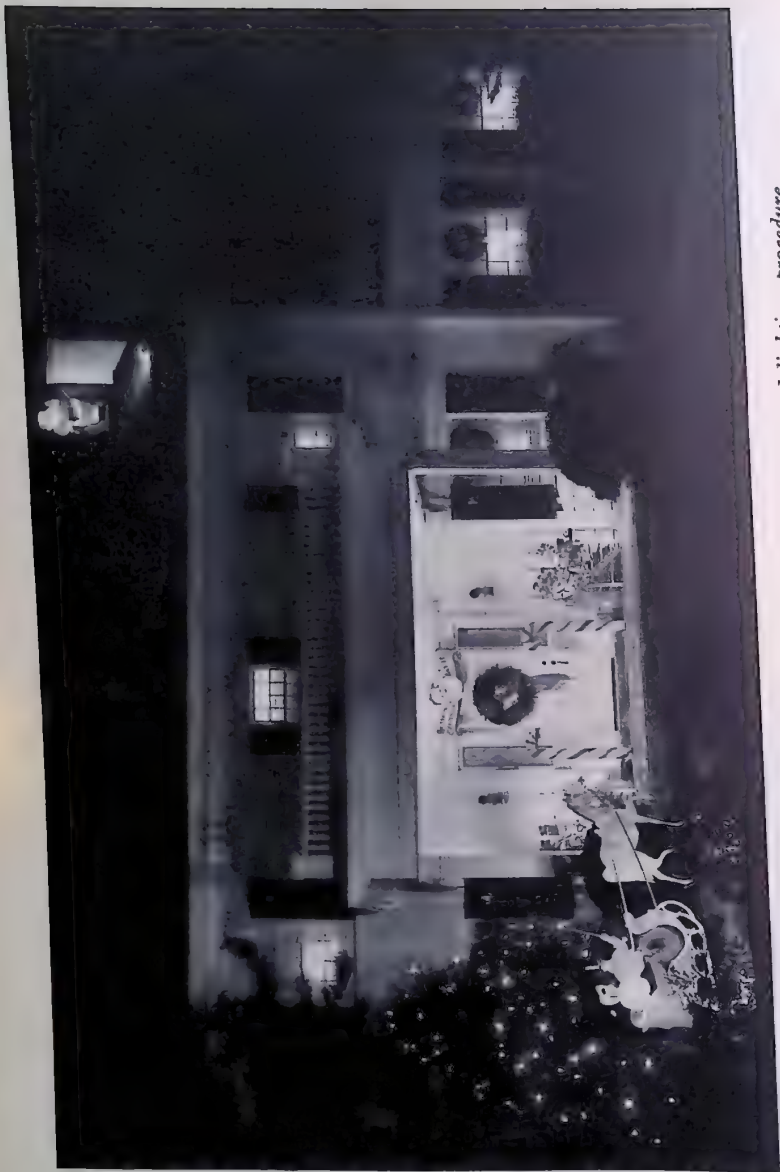


Figure 58. *A lighting display created with good design and lighting procedure.*

The factor that probably will carry most weight with the judges when they view your decorative scheme is the general artistic effect. This means that in creating your display you should pay attention to good design principles and proper lighting procedures. Notice how the well-designed display shown in Figure 58 carries out the simple but important principles that were presented earlier in Chapter 2. The projector lamps on the lawn are well screened from view by evergreen shields. The principal focal point—the couple in the sleigh approaching the doorway and the doorway itself—is well lighted and separated from another lesser focal point—the Santa on the roof. Originality is displayed in the stacking of gaily wrapped Christmas packages on tables placed on each side of the door. Balance is maintained by the peppermint sticks and the large, handsome wreath on the door. The effect of the entire scheme is one of careful balance, good lighting technique, and interesting originality.

Figure 59. *A first-place winner in a Christmas Home Lighting Contest.*





Figure 60. "Five Minutes to Twelve."



## PRIZE-WINNERS TO EMULATE

A prize-winning ensemble is shown in Figure 59. Again, careful balance, an elaborate and artistic roof display, ingenuity in using the existing surroundings, all are featured in this lovely Christmas picture. Also note how general illumination is used to unify the decorating scheme without producing a flat, uninteresting appearance.

Figure 60 shows how eye-arresting your originality really can be. According to the clock, it is five minutes to twelve and Santa in his gift-filled sleigh is just about on time. The snowman is striking up the band to welcome the jolly old gent. And the Christmas tree indoors is glowing with light, ready for Santa's long-awaited arrival.

Another contest winner is shown in Figure 61. Notice how again the centers of interest are kept far enough apart not only in physical distance but also by the levels of illumination. Good flood-lighting shows up the brick texture of the home to give added interest to this display.

On the cover of this book, there are reproduced in color two more prize-winning displays. Notice how the features of the two different architectures are taken advantage of to build attractive, eye-filling lighting schemes.

Figure 61. *Another contest winner.*



# 6

## *Taking a Photograph to Be Proud of*

---

Earlier in this book it was said that when you decorate your home for Christmas, you are creating a picture, just as any artist who puts paint to canvas. Unfortunately, however, the Christmas Season is gone all too soon, and your "painting" must be dismantled. But you can record your decorations with your camera and have a picture that will keep the memories of this Christmas ever fresh.

An outdoor scene that has been "painted with light" can be a tricky thing to photograph since there are many factors that have to be taken into consideration. Outdoor displays usually include quite a few dark outlines, such as buildings and trees, and it is necessary to include these outlines unless you want the lighting display to look as if it were hanging in mid-air.

### **FILL LIGHT**

One of the methods used to retain detail in the darker area

is the use of "fill light." This means taking the exposure at twilight or using flash bulbs, being careful not to use too much fill light exposure. If you find it necessary to use a flash bulb, be careful to avoid over-lighting caused by the reflections of objects such as glass window panes and snow on the ground. As a general rule, however, outdoor pictures are best taken with a time exposure.

For most scenes, like the one shown in Figure 62 which can be considered medium bright to very bright, the exposure would range from 1 to 4 seconds, depending upon the specific brightness of the scene. If you use color film, the exposure should be longer, anywhere from 5 to 20 seconds. Take several shots with different exposures until you determine the best one. You can judge the number of seconds that elapse by saying at a conversational rate of speed, "one-oh-oh-one," "two-oh-oh-two," and so on. An exposure meter or guide will also help you determine the proper time exposure.

Color pictures taken of Christmas decorations are, of course, very attractive. You can find color film to fit any type of camera. With the miniature camera, you can make lovely

Figure 62. *A picture to be proud of.*





Figure 63. *A symphony in light and snow recorded by the camera.*

35-mm color slides, to project, greatly enlarged, on a screen. With other types of camera, even with the simple box variety, you can take full color snapshots. Just remember that the time exposure for color pictures is longer and should be based on the important highlight areas of the scene, rather than on shadow areas which determine the exposure for black-and-whites. Also, color pictures should be taken at closer range than black-and-white shots.

#### THE ABC'S OF CHRISTMAS LIGHTING PHOTOGRAPHY

Here are a few basic rules that will help you get fairly decent results:

1. Use a tripod or other solid support for your camera.
2. Plan your pictures in advance. Decide on the angle at which you will shoot and get your equipment set up and ready.



3. Take the picture by the existing light whenever possible for the most honest and effective photograph.

4. Take outdoor pictures at twilight. There is just the "right" moment when it is not too early so that you will get a daylight effect, nor too late when there won't be enough shadow detail.

5. If you do use a flash, do not overexpose; avoid unwanted shadows from trees and reflections from windows.

6. Take advantage of snow on the ground—it enhances every scene. Notice how beautifully the snow-laden shrubbery has been photographed in Figure 63.

#### INDOOR PICTURES

Taking pictures of your favorite mantel arrangement or centerpiece is something you will want to do, for they certainly deserve a place in your Yuletide snapshot collection.

For indoor decorations, you can shoot the picture by using flash bulbs. For the length of exposure, simply follow the instructions packed with the film you are using or those on the flash-bulb carton.

If you are taking a picture of a lighted decoration such as a Christmas tree or the arrangement shown in Figure 64 you can use a time exposure. Normal room lighting is usually sufficient for fill light, and no flashbulb is needed. A rough estimate for an exposure of a lighted object using color film would be about 20 seconds at lens stop  $F/11$ . A black-and-white picture of the same tree, on the other hand, would use roughly a time exposure of about 5 seconds at lens stop  $F/11$ . These are only suggestions, and you should be willing to waste a little bit of film to find just the right time exposure by taking several snapshots.



Figure 64. *The frosty brilliance of Christmas ornaments and the star-like glow of a candle flame put on film for your Christmas snapshot album.*

## II



### The Home Indoors . . .

### A Lovely Christmas Card



Christmas is the one special season that can bring the whole family together just by the sharing of family customs and by the general participation of young and old in decorating for the Yuletide. For the youngster to be able to say "In our home we all did this-or-that for Christmas" is to carry through life precious memories beyond material value.

Decorating the home indoors for Christmas is truly a family activity, for Dad can string the lights and create lovely lighting effects throughout the rooms, Mom can build the wreaths, the centerpieces, and attractive plant arrangements, and the kids can chip in with easy-to-make, delightful ornaments and novelties. And, of course, the fun of decorating the Christmas tree should be and can be shared by all.

Give yourself and the family plenty of time. Making your own decorations usually consumes more time than you may think at first. Also, by allowing yourself ample time you can better coordinate the family's activities into an over-all decorating plan which can make your decorations much more effective. For example, many of the fruits, nuts, and berries that make a Christmas wreath entrancing can be collected in the fall. They can be preserved for later use by giving them a coat of clear shellac, lacquer, or varnish.



# 7

## *Hints on Indoor Design and Decorative Materials*



### DESIGN

Although principles of good design and “rules” for making your decorations fit the style of your home cannot be ignored entirely, don’t be too restricted by them. Let each creation reflect your own originality. The important thing is that all share in the fun of decorating the home for Christmas and that, when admiring an “original” design by a family member, you don’t raise your eyebrows too high.

### SELECT A THEME

Many people like to coordinate the decorating activities of their family by using a theme. The theme should be conceived well in advance of the time for actually making the decorations and should be a topic for discussion among all the family members.

Perhaps a special kind of theme is appealing, a particular theme suggested by the interests or hobbies most popular with

the family. For example, garden lovers may want to emphasize the use of flowers and unique plant materials in their decorating scheme, whereas spiritual devotees may build their decorating scheme about Madonnas and creches. Or a phrase from a favorite poem or song may suggest a Christmas theme that can be carried throughout the house. One of the jubilant sentiments during the Christmas Season is expressed by the phrase "Joy to the World." How these ringing words can be translated into a decorative arrangement is shown in Figure 65.

For this composition, white pine, blue spruce, and blue-berried juniper form a circle symbolizing the hope of peace around the world, with the bells from Damascus pealing joy. The hemlock covering the base supports balls of juniper and gold-touched cones. The cones and balls add a yellow accent.

#### PROVIDE FOR A CENTER OF INTEREST

In making your decoration plan, provide for a focal point or center of interest for the eye to rest on. Then with care-



Figure 65. *Wild and Sweet the Words Repeat . . . Joy to the World. Arranged by Mrs. Frank Webb — photographed by Joe Clark.*

ful placement, surround it with supplementary units of decoration that enhance but do not detract attention from the focal point. This principle applies whether you are contemplating the over-all decorating of a room or whether you are planning a single unit of composition such as a centerpiece for a table.

Another "rule" to remember is: separate your centers of interest in a room by enough distance so that they don't compete with one another for the eye's attention. In most living rooms, for example, the Christmas tree will be the principal center of interest. Another center of interest will probably be the mantel decoration. Consequently, do not place the Christmas tree near a mantel that is itself a focal point of decoration.

#### KEEP YOUR DECORATIONS APPROPRIATE AND IN SCALE

Simplicity, appropriateness, and originality are goals that should be kept in mind when making your Christmas decorating plan. A room that has every fixture cluttered with Christmas greenery and ornaments is hardly a thing of beauty. On the other hand, a room decorated with discrimination to harmonize with the existing interior decoration shows not only a sense of design in the decorating scheme, but good taste as well.

Decorations should be related to the surroundings and to the spirit of the Season. In a room, for example, that uses modern furniture and design, the Christmas decorations should be simple and should emphasize line and form. In conceiving the compositions themselves, use traditional Christmas symbols, such as Madonnas, wreaths, creches, bells, candy canes, etc. Use them, however, with originality of design and good taste.

Also important in good design is proper scale. Decorations should be in proper proportion to the space in which they are used. A small wreath, although beautifully arranged, will fail to give a pleasing effect if it is hung on an over-sized door.

## USE COLOR FOR EFFECT

Finally, the proper use of color in your Christmas decorating scheme is of utmost importance. The traditional Christmas colors are, of course, red and green. However, other colors can be used quite effectively to supplement them and to give bright accents or interesting contrasts. In using colors, remember that artificial light has a changing effect on them as do colors themselves upon other colors.

The way in which you use colors can create a desired mood. For example, brilliant reds and oranges not only inspire a feeling of warmth but also are very stimulating. On the other hand, dark colors, such as deep blues and greens, give a feeling of remoteness and quiet coolness.

Color schemes need not depend entirely on the Christmas reds and greens. Often they can be suggested by the existing colors already in the room, or perhaps by the hues that are characteristic of the region in which you live.

For example, the unique table arrangement shown in Figure 66 is inspired by the golden browns and the magenta shades of West Texas. The analogous color scheme used in this Madonna arrangement is outlined by a broken halo of bronzed yucca, whose tips have been dipped in gold sparkle for emphasis. An unglazed Madonna rubbed with brown shoe polish to a velvet-like sheen forms the center placement. Gold Christmas balls repeat the curve of the Madonna's robe, and a home-made candle of brown color gives stability to the vertical thrust of the yucca. Magenta straw flowers outline the Madonna and drift down through the balls, softening the entire arrangement and emphasizing the circular motion of the design. A fragment of petrified wood repeats the magenta of the flowers, picks up the golden browns of the rest of the composition, and adds necessary weight at the base. The arrangement is shown on a brass tray and the design is repeated on the reverse side of the yucca, thus creating interest from all sides of the table.



Figure 66. *Madonna of the Desert*. Arranged by Mrs. Howard S. Kittel — photographed by Lawrence Joseph.



### DECORATING MATERIALS

Most of the fun in decorating the home indoors is in making your own decorations. Besides the obvious advantage of keeping the Christmas decorating activity within family budgets, if you "do it yourself" you gain a freedom of expression that can make your Christmas scheme fit naturally into the existing interior decoration of your home.

The decorations that are presented in this book are made from easily accessible and, in most instances, inexpensive materials and equipment. The kinds of material you choose is limited only by your imagination and ingenuity. We shall give no list here, for no list could hope to be complete, but, in the descriptions of home-made Christmas projects that follow, the variety of ordinary household material that can be adapted to decorative purposes will become evident. Also, other similar materials that can be used quite as effectively will suggest themselves. For example, a cored apple sprinkled with

snow and glitter will make an attractive candle holder. But then, so will a smooth-peeled potato or a small pineapple decorated in a similar manner. It is evident how one kind of material can suggest other related types for use in Christmas decorations.

Often, the materials you choose will depend upon their availability in your particular region of the country. For example, if you live in our great Southwest, where the tradi-



Figure 67. *Native materials inspired with the breath of Christmas artistry. Arranged by Mrs. Howard S. Kittel—photographed by Lawrence Joseph.*

tional evergreens and berries such as the pines and holly are not native to the arid areas, you can very advantageously employ such things as chestnut burrs, yucca pods, cotton bolls, Jimson weeds, seed pods, or many other related plant forms.

In Figure 67, chestnut burrs are featured. They form a velvety cradle for small blue and silver Christmas balls as

they sweep around a turquoise platter expressing the spirit of Christmas. The large home-made candle and the rounded board that was used for a base were first wrapped in aluminum foil and then sprayed heavily with liquid snow. The soft brown burrs complement the natural wood of the mantel on which the decoration rests and blend with the paneling of the room. The entire composition was sprayed lightly with snow to unify the various elements and to add a realistic Christmas touch.

#### EVERGREENS

Decorating the home indoors with greenery during the Christmas Season traces back, some say, to antiquity when the Romans and Teutons brought evergreens indoors during winter weather as a symbol of bringing in "life." One can give this legend credence, for surely the clean, bracing fragrance of pine and fir, and even their feel and look, create a vivacious atmosphere during the Christmas Season.

*Needle Evergreens.* Probably the best of the needle evergreens for both indoor and outdoor decorating use is pine, particularly white pine. Its soft, dark blue-green needles (about 4 inches long) stay fresh for a long time, and its graceful form and delicate texture make it rewarding to work with. Its cones are long and slender and form beautiful decorations themselves. Other pines—Scotch, red, and jack—are also long-needled and quite suitable decorative materials.

Balsam fir has short shiny, dark green needles, usually an inch or so long, and is quite aromatic. It has excellent keeping qualities and is superior for use as a Christmas tree.

Cedar and arborvitae are also fragrant and excellent decorative materials. Their feathery appearance often is just the touch needed in an evergreen composition.

Hemlock and spruce are fine for use outdoors, but they quickly lose their needles when brought indoors.

Figure 68 shows some of the evergreens described above.

*Broad-leaf Evergreens.* The most commonly used of the broad-leaf type are boxwood, leucothoë, holly, rhododendron, and English ivy. These may be used as the body of a wreath or centerpiece, but they are much more effective as accent trimmings.

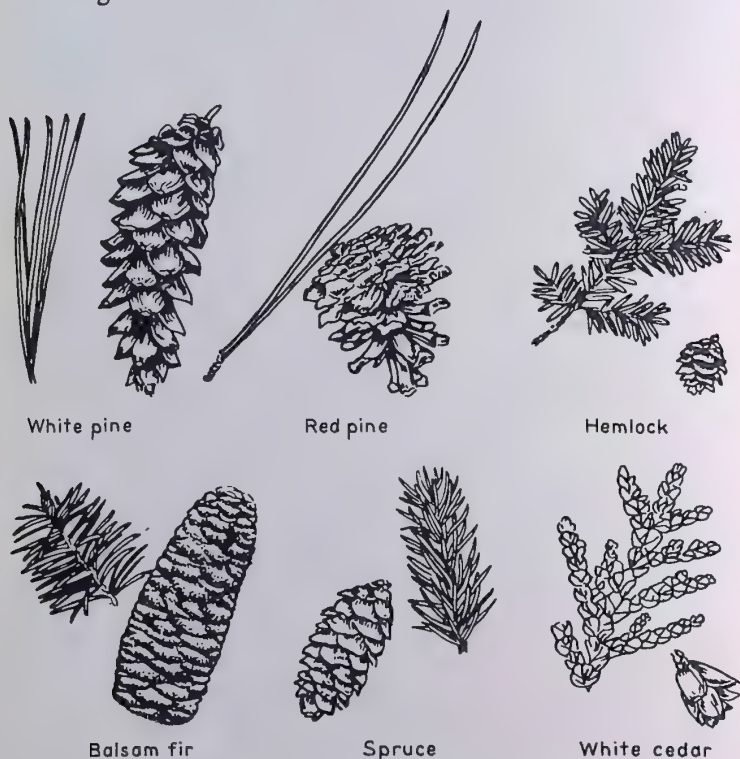


Figure 68. *Types of evergreens and their cones.*

*Combining Evergreens.* Decorations are much more attractive if you use more than one type of evergreen. It is a fascinating challenge, when you build a wreath or spray, to try combinations that blend the different textures, colors, and



forms of the various Christmas evergreens. For example, for an outdoor wreath, pine and hemlock make an interesting combination. The soft texture of hemlock blends nicely with the fine-textured pine, and the contrast of the long-needled pine with the short-needled hemlock gives a pleasing effect. Broad-leaved evergreens, such as rhododendron, give accent to the needled evergreens and make a lovely combination. Colors can also be blended. For example, white pine and yew have contrasting shades of green. Blue spruce, on the other hand, offers another color entirely. If you use colored light on evergreens, be sure it is a green or blue-green, to enhance the natural color.

#### OTHER PLANT MATERIALS

In addition to the evergreens, many other plant materials can provide a rich source of decorative form and color.

*Flowers.* Fresh flowers are available at your florist during the Christmas Season, and your choice is a matter of individual preference. Special mention, however, should be made of the poinsettia, the "flower of the Holy Night" whose gorgeous crimson blooms is a lovely sight indeed. The poinsettia has become the almost universal American Christmas plant since Dr. Joel Robert Poinsett brought this plant from Mexico a century or so ago.

Artificial poinsettia can be arranged on the door or wall in life-sized form or as plant arrangements in smaller size. A beautiful decorative arrangement can be made by placing a yellow Christmas tree bulb (C-6½) in the heart of each crimson-velvet artificial poinsettia and grouping, say, five or six of them in a low white bowl in which broad-leaved evergreens form a base. The soft glow of the lamps in the heart of each flower makes a very striking lighted arrangement.

*Dried Materials.* Cones make splendid decorations. In Figure 68 the various cones of the evergreens are shown, and, except for the balsam fir cone which usually disintegrates easily, all of them can be used. They can be painted silver or gold,

sprayed heavily with snow, or touched up in many delightful ways. Cones can be wired for use in trimming by wrapping a length of No. 18 wire in under the scales at the base. This wire can then be pushed into the base of the wreath or fastened to the wreath frame. Cones also can form a decorative arrangement by themselves, as shown in Figure 69.

Pods of the poppy and milkweed make suggestive Christmas ornaments when painted or gilded. Acorns, hazelnuts, chestnuts, pecans, and walnuts can also be painted or gilded or given a clear coat of shellac and added to Christmas decorations. They can be attached to the decoration by piercing them with a heavy needle or small finishing nail, running a wire or string through the hole, and fastening the wire to the decoration.

Figure 70 shows a wreath constructed of cones, seed pods, etc., that will furnish years of enjoyment and can be used for outdoor or indoor decoration. Each article is given a rigid wire stem and inserted into a base that forms the ring of the wreath. The base can be either a wire frame filled with sphagnum moss and wrapped with wax paper or plastic foam about 2 inches thick and cut to the size and shape desired. Gold rib-



Figure 69. *A study in cones.*  
*Arranged by Mrs. Frederick*  
*Carder.*

Figure 70. *A wreath made from dried materials alone. Arranged by Mrs. W. H. Barton—photographed by H. Gallup.*



bon used in the bow or gilding a few of the cones adds to the delightful beauty of the wreath.

*Fruits and Berries.* Artificial or natural fruits and berries set in an evergreen decoration add an attractive touch. Miniature apples, oranges, lemons, limes, kumquats, pears, and grapes are often used, especially in the making of a "Della Robbia" type of wreath. Cranberries are excellent materials for giving a "string of color" effect. Colored berries, such as bittersweet, bayberry, mountain ash, rose hips, and winterberry, also are fine for trimmings.

Natural fruits and berries can be given added luster and protection if, after you attach wire stems, you dip them in clear lacquer, white shellac diluted with alcohol, or clear varnish. They can be suspended by the wire stem until they are dry and then arranged on the decoration you are making.

## SNOW EFFECTS

For indoor arrangements, a thick starch paste or a creamy paste of whitewash may be used to simulate snow. A saturated solution of Epsom salts will leave crystals on the decoration when the water evaporates and will give a frosty effect. A heavy lather of soap will also look like snow when applied to greens and allowed to dry. Even simpler, white shoe polish that can be daubed on with an applicator makes a realistic snow effect.

*Aerosol Snow.* The convenient push-button spray container of snow is a decorating aid during Christmas which is well worth the investment. Besides the traditional white, many other colors are available for unusual effects. Also, fluorescent colors can be obtained which, when placed under "black light," glow in vivid color and add a third-dimensional look to your decoration.

In using a spray-on snow, spray from a distance of about two feet—the greater the distance, the fluffier the deposit on the object being decorated. Some containers also enable you to pin-point the snow spray on small areas.

Figure 71 shows an attractive use of cones that have been sprayed heavily with snow. This frosty spray can be hung over the mantel or on a large door. Pine cones are wired to a base of balsam fir branches and the entire design is heavily sprayed with artificial snow. Sprigs of holly and a big red bow have been added as trimmings.

**"BLACK LIGHT"**

The "black light" lamp produces ultraviolet light, although a noticeable quantity of visible light is also thrown. The visible light can be screened out with a red-purple glass filter. The 100-watt lamp must be used with a transformer. However, you can use an ordinary fluorescent light fixture fitted with a 15-watt black-light tube to make your fluorescent materials fluoresce.



The fluoro-paints come in a wide variety of striking colors and can be sprayed on with a paint spray gun or, although less satisfactorily, with an insect sprayer that can be bought quite cheaply. Trees, ornaments, or cutouts can be painted and made to glow under the beam of a "black light" lamp. Fluoro-satin ribbon in several widths and colors is also available. In addition, the fluorescent snow mentioned previously is a recent addition to the materials that can be used with "black light."

#### GLITTER AND SEQUINS

Glitter is a granulated mineral, usually silver or gold in color, although it can be obtained in other colors. It can be used on wreaths to give sparkle to the edges of broad-leaf evergreens or to decorate nuts, fruits, and berries. To apply, sprinkle it on an adhesive coating, such as rubber cement or clear nail polish.

Sequins, such as those that brighten milady's dresses, can also be used to add sparkle to a decoration. They can be applied in the same manner as glitter.

Figure 71. *A frosty spray for your Christmas door or mantel wall.*



# 8

## *Making Wreaths, Sprays, and Garlands*

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### MAKING THE FRAME FOR A WREATH

The wreath frame can be constructed from willow switches, strong flexible boughs, or No. 9 or 10 wire. Coat hangers can be used for lightweight wreaths. The size of the circle will vary according to your needs, but a medium-sized wreath frame should be about 12-15 inches in diameter.

To form the circle, the ends of the material you use for the frame can be bound together with No. 22 or 24 wire. If you use two or more lengths of boughs, overlap the slender end of one bough on the heavy end of the other several inches and bind the ends securely with binding wire.

### ATTACHING THE GREENERY

The length of the sprigs to be bound to your frame will depend upon the size of your wreath. For the medium-sized wreath, sprigs 4-6 inches long are large enough, although longer sprigs will give you a more informal-looking wreath.



Figure 72. The "how-to-do-it" of making a wreath.

The needles should be stripped about one inch from the bottom of the evergreen stem to avoid bulkiness in the body of the wreath. Wire several sprigs together first, instead of trying to wrap each sprig separately to the frame. No. 22 or 24 wire or florist's thread can be used to tie the sprigs in a bundle and then to attach the bundles to the frame. Before you begin attaching them to the wreath, be sure that you have tied together enough bundles to go around the frame.

To attach the sprig bundles to the frame, first tie the end of the binding wire securely to the frame. (See Figure 72.) Then place the first of the already wired sprigs on the frame and fasten at least one inch of the stems to the frame with at least five or six turns of the binding wire.

Keep on binding the already tied-together sprigs on the frame in the same way. Lap the bushy part of the succeeding sprigs over the place at which the preceding ones were fastened. By this method, none of the wiring or the bare stems will be visible. Finally, fasten the binding wire securely to the frame so that it will not unwind and loosen the wreath.

If this is your first try at wreath making, apply the sprigs in one direction only, preferably counter-clockwise. However, for more experienced hands, the sprigs can be fastened in

opposite directions so that one half of the wreath goes clockwise and the other counter-clockwise, as shown in Figure 72. Also note that the completed wreath in Figure 72 has a graduated appearance, that is, the thickness at the bottom becomes gradually thinner as it approaches the top. The bottom sprigs are 6 inches long and the top ones 2 inches long.

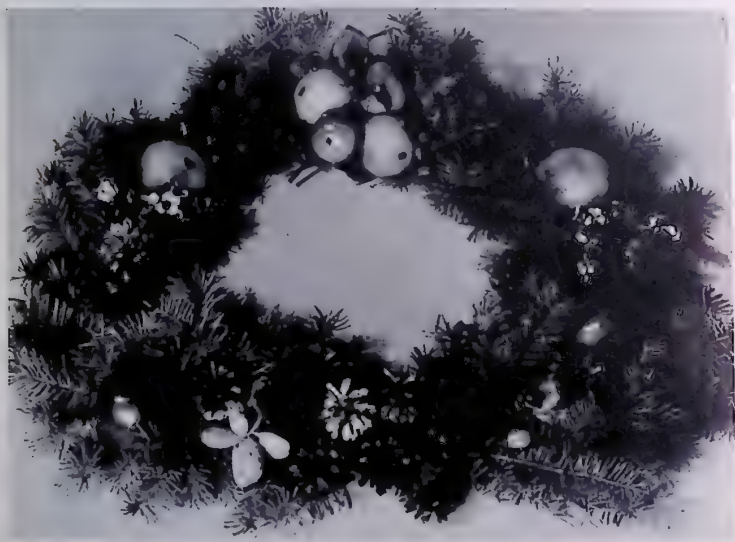


Figure 73. A "Della Robbia" Christmas wreath. Brightly lacquered red apples, oranges, cherries, holly berries, pecans, almonds, bittersweet and pine cones brushed with gold and copper paint are the trimmings on this evergreen wreath. Arranged by Mrs. F. P. O'Reilly.

To make a double-faced wreath, just wire two single-faced wreaths back to back.

Finally, using clippers, trim off any straggly pieces and shape the wreath to your satisfaction.



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**TRIMMING THE WREATH**

Always finish the foundation of your wreath first before you add the trimmings. Hold back the tips of the sprigs when you put your decorations in place, so that the tips will not be turned under. The trimmings you use will depend on the type of wreath you desire. A "Della Robbia" wreath is trimmed with fruits and nuts, whereas others may be simply trimmed with a few Christmas balls. You will get some good ideas from studying the wreaths illustrated in this book. A "Della Robbia" wreath is pictured in Figure 73.

**MAKING THE BOW**

Make the bow before you tie it on the wreath. An attractive bow can be made by looping the ribbon and fastening the loops in the middle with a piece of No. 26 wire. For the medium-sized wreath, a bow with loops about six inches long are attractive. Three or four loops should be adequate. Of course, keep the shiny side of the ribbon up.

A shower of narrow ribbon, about 15 or 16 inches long, can be attached in the back of the bow instead of the usual wide ribbon. Bind together 10 or 12 lengths of ribbon and fasten them to the frame behind the bow. Small bells jingling from the ends of the ribbons are especially attractive additions.

Instead of ribbon, an unusual touch can be added by attaching to the bottom of the wreath a shower of tinsel streamers with icicles added. To complete the silvery sparkle effect, trim the wreath with silver Christmas balls formed into a crescent at the upper half of the wreath.

**MAKING SPRAYS**

Sprays are somewhat more easy to make than wreaths. The base can be simply a large flat piece of greenery. For example, a large branch of white cedar can form the base of an attractive spray. A slightly smaller grouping of spruce or fir can then be added. Sprays of white pine can then be wired

to the fir and the whole design topped with cones and ribbon.

Figure 71 illustrates an eye-filling spray that features snow-capped cones.

#### MAKING GARLANDS AND FESTOONS

Garlands and festoons can be made simply from some evergreen sprigs and an old rope, a discarded electric cord, or fairly heavy wire. One end should be tied to a stationary object, such as a door knob, to make the job easier. Evergreen sprigs are then fastened to the cord or wire in the same manner as in making a wreath. The sprigs should be three or four inches long.


Make sure that the cord is well covered. Keep the cord taut as you go along to prevent its being wrapped around the evergreens.

The festoon can be graduated in size, especially if you use it to lead the eye to a center of interest. It should narrow, of course, as it approaches the focal point.

Cones, fruits, berries, Christmas balls, bells, and the like make nice decorations on a garland.

# 9

## *The Christmas Tree*



The joys of Christmas time are many, but the fullest joy of all comes when happy children squeal with delight at the breathtaking sight of a decorated Christmas tree, resplendent with light. Beneath the tree lie the gaily wrapped gifts that have been the topic of many a carefully worded letter to Santa Claus. The clean, redolent scent of balsam fir fills the air, and the brilliant, magic glow of Christmas lights illumines the room.

Perhaps a Christmas tree trimming party is nearing its end. Dad is relaxing in his favorite chair after having brought in the tree, placed it in the stand, and strung the lights. Mom is admiring the beauty of her design while she artfully directs and helps in the hanging of the ornaments and the placing of the trimmings. The kids are still busy hanging their home-made decorations.

For most of us, Christmas has first a feeling of deep reverence for the religious significance of the birth of the Savior. But also important is the joy of a family sharing the fun and the happiness of decorating the Christmas tree.

## BUYING THE CHRISTMAS TREE

There are several kinds of Christmas trees that can be bought, and, in part, the choice may be dependent on the region in which you live. In identifying the various species, the most simple and practical method is to look at the needles. On page 109, Figure 72, the more common types of evergreen needles are shown and described.

Probably the most used Christmas tree, easily available in the Central and Eastern States, is the balsam fir. The needles are short— $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches in length—and are dark green in color. They are attached on opposite sides to twigs in a manner that resemble crosses, and the story goes that this resemblance may have influenced the use of the balsam fir as the traditional Christmas tree. It has a fragrant aroma, and its tendency to keep fresh indoors makes it an ideally suited tree for Christmas decoration.

Douglas fir is also widely used and can be distinguished from the balsam fir by the way its needles are attached all the way around the twig rather than on opposite sides.

The spruce and hemlock are not recommended for indoor Christmas trees, for they soon lose their needles when brought indoors.

When choosing a tree, the major considerations to be kept in mind are:

1. Will the tree stay fresh and keep its needles indoors for the length of the Holiday Season?
2. Is its shape symmetrical?
3. Is its size appropriate in scale to the room in which it is to be used?
4. Do its limbs have strength adequate to support ornaments and Christmas lights and wire?
5. Are the branches springy enough so that they will assume their natural shape when the tree is installed?
6. Does it have a fragrant odor?
7. Is its color a healthy green?



## MAKING YOUR OWN TREE STAND

Ready-made stands for Christmas trees are available at reasonable prices and probably are worth buying since they can be used for a number of years. However, you may want to make your own. Figure 74 shows a sturdy stand that can be constructed with easily obtained materials. After you have wedged the tree stem in the can with the stones, drive a long nail through the bottom of the can and into the base of the tree stem. Then solder around the nail head and can to prevent water from leaking through. Nail braces as shown.



(a)



(b)

Figure 74. (a) *The materials for a home-made Christmas tree stand. The stones are used to wedge the tree trunk into the tin can.* (b) *The tree inserted and the braces being nailed to the tree trunk.*

Paint the can or cover it with fire-resistant material, such as crepe paper, tape some Christmas tree lights on a string to the braces, and attach greenery around them and to the wooden base of the stand. And, of course, add water to the can. A lovely and practical Christmas tree stand, indeed.

## CARING FOR THE CHRISTMAS TREE

If you are fortunate enough to live near a nursery where you can buy a freshly cut tree, by all means do so, for a minimum of time should elapse between the cutting of the tree and its use. The tree loses moisture once it is cut from its natural stand, and you must take steps to retard this dying process. Store it in a cool, shady place. Saw the butt end diagonally about an inch above the original cut and *place it in water*. Sprinkle the branches and needles daily with water. And don't bring the tree indoors until you are ready to use it. The tree stand in which you place it should have a container of some kind *to hold water around the butt of the tree*.

## LIGHTING EQUIPMENT


Christmas tree lamps come in miniature, candelabra, and intermediate base, designated as C-6, C-7½, and C-9½ respectively. The C-6 lamps are wired on a series-type string, that is, if one burns out, the others go out too. The C-7½ are wired on a multiple-type string, that is, if one goes out, the others remain lighted. The latter are, of course, preferable if you want to avoid the irritation of testing all the lamps before you can find the defective one.

Reflector lamps for spot- or flood-lighting come in a medium-screw base that can be fitted to any ordinary household socket. For the average use, the 75-watt lamp is adequate, although 150-watt and 300-watt sizes are available. Reflector lamps are for indoor use only and are designated by the capital letter R, for example, R-30. These are to be distinguished from the PAR-38 lamps that are constructed for outdoor use as well. Never use reflector lamps outdoors unless they are equipped with heat-resistant glass.

A safety fuse plug that attaches to your Christmas tree light string and that can be inserted into an electric outlet gives you good local protection and is worth while using. These plugs can be bought at most stores.

## HINTS FOR DECORATING THE TREE

The Christmas tree is usually the largest center-of-interest decoration unit in the average-sized living room. As such, it should receive some careful planning as to its size, shape, and decoration. An overwhelmingly large tree will dwarf and destroy the beauty of your over-all decorating scheme. On the other hand, a tree too small will lose its effectiveness as the center of interest. There is an ideal-sized tree for every living room and a few minutes' thought will give you its proper dimensions.

You should have, of course, purchased a basically well-shaped tree, but much can be done to improve its symmetry by the careful placement of lights and ornaments. Remember the basic shape of a tree is a cone. This should suggest to you the wisdom of placing large ornaments at the bottom and smaller ones as you go to the top. Also, the stringing of lights should emphasize the natural contours of the tree. We recommend the placing of your lights in a wave-shaped fashion, that is, , around the tree. Allow the main branches of the tree to support the strings of lights, and place lamps as much as possible on branches, so that few, if any, lamps hang in mid-air. For better results, fasten the lamps upright in a candle fashion.

How many lamps should you use for a tree? Measure the width of your tree at its base and also the tree height. Multiply the width by the base. Then multiply this product by  $1\frac{1}{2}$ . Thus, for a tree 4 feet wide and 6 feet high,

$$\begin{aligned}\text{ht. of tree} \times \text{width of tree} \times 1\frac{1}{2} \\ 6 \times 4 \times 1\frac{1}{2} = 36\end{aligned}$$

Now, for a really solid effect, multiply by 2 and you should use 72 lights on a 6-foot tree.

What about color? If all the Christmas light colors are used, a good color and brightness balance can be achieved if you

have roughly twice as many blue and green lamps as you have white, orange, and red.

If you fancy modern design, you may want to use all blue lamps with white accents added by means of silver icicles. Or perhaps you might prefer all green lamps to enhance the natural loveliness of the evergreen color with accent provided by large yellow Christmas balls and a touch of white snow.

#### TRIMMING THE TREE

Begin your tree decorating by stringing the lights on the tree. Start at the top of the tree and work downward. Fasten the lamps on the inside branches first and work outward to the tips. If you are using several colors, alternate them in proper proportion, perhaps two blue and green to every red, orange, or white lamp. Should you want more sparkle from your lights, add reflectors. You can buy them ready-made or you can make your own by cutting circles from household aluminum foil. Then make a small opening in the center of the reflector and tape them on the light socket. They can then be pleated or decorated with colored cellophane tape. Be sure that the foil doesn't touch the metal inner shell of the socket.

The ornaments you use might tie in with the theme you have chosen for the over-all decorations of your room. For example, angels or other decorations with religious overtones might prevail in your decoration motif. In the next section, illustrations are given to suggest how you can make your own ornaments from simple materials.

Icicles, tinsel, snow, roping, and so on should be used with enough restraint so that the natural loveliness of the tree itself is not completely hidden. On the other hand, don't make the tree look as if you had suddenly run out of ornaments or trimming material. A full, generously decorated tree is more fun to trim and generally more eye-filling.

## MAKING YOUR OWN TREE ORNAMENTS

Here are some ideas for making your ornaments.

1. Plastic foam cut in interesting shapes and sizes, such as reindeer, snowflakes, stars, bells, etc., and decorated with glitter and sequins.
2. Walnut halves covered with metallic paint and sprinkled with glitter.
3. Strings of cranberries or popcorn.
4. Painted evergreen cones in silver, gold, or bronze.
5. Tin-can lids cut in star shapes and sprinkled with glitter, or cut in circles and colored pictures pasted on.
6. A bundle of cellophane straws fastened in a bunch securely at the center and fanned out to form pompons.
7. Whole egg shells, whose contents have been removed from a carefully made hole, decorated with sequins, metallic paper stars, colored cellophane tape, or decals.
8. "Good-enough-to-eat" ornaments like candies and cookies especially suited for Christmas.
9. Paper cups made to look like angels (see Figure 75a) or simply decorated with colored paper and transparent cellophane tape in barber-shop-pole fashion or in other designs.
10. Baking cups clustered together and decorated with colored cellophane tape. Or make them into garlands by pasting them bottom to bottom and running a ribbon through them. (See Figure 75b.)
11. "Life savers" strung together in chains with colored cellophane tape and used as roping for the tree. Or make designs of the candies taped around discarded cellophane tape spools. (See Figure 75c.)
12. Sticks of chewing gum stripped down to the silver foil and held together and decorated with colored cellophane tape to resemble crosses, spokes, triangles, etc.
13. Spools of thread fastened with colored cellophane tape





(a) Drinking cup angels.



(c) "Life-savers."

Figure 75. Christmas tree ornaments you can make yourself.

(b) Baking cups.



(d) Spools of thread.



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and decorated with colored paper cutouts and sequins. (See Figure 75d.)

14. Seed pods of the honey locust, trumpet vine, bladder nut, or seed balls of the sycamore and sweet gum trees painted gold or silver or with bright-colored enamel.

From the foregoing suggestions, it is evident that the making of Christmas ornaments is only limited by your own imagination and ingenuity. For example, you might say, How about using milk bottle tops, purse mirrors, colored crepe paper, ribbon bows, cardboard cutouts, lace-paper doilies, metallic paper, cheese boxes, Christmas cards. . . . ? Of course, use them and, for that matter, use mason jar rings too! But paint and decorate them brightly in original ways.

#### DECORATING UNDER THE TREE

A Christmas scene under the tree adds a lot of appeal, especially for the youngsters. Electric railroad trains are nice, too, but these can be dangerous. Sparks flying from an electric train set might turn your happy holiday into a grief-stricken one. So if you use them, take extreme precautions to guard against fire and place the tracks well away from the outermost branches of the tree.

A Christmas village for under the tree can be made fairly simply from miniature paper houses, churches, and so on that can be bought at the five-and-ten-cent store. The landscape can be made from chicken wire stapled to the sides of a plywood box frame. The sides of the box should be at least three inches high. Place a string of Christmas bulbs inside the box and bring the bulbs through the chicken wire mesh at appropriate places to light the scene. The chicken wire can be bunched and raised to form hills and slopes. Use yellow bulbs to light your houses, a blue bulb to light your church, and white bulbs concealed behind star cutouts that hang from the lower branches of the tree to light your "stars."

Colored spray-on snow in aerosol containers will make your Christmas scene come alive. White snow, of course, is used to cover the rolling hills, green snow for lowland areas, and other colors can be sprayed on to accent vegetation, roof tops, etc.

#### PACKAGES

Of course, the traditional place for your gaily-wrapped Christmas packages is under the Christmas tree. In Chapter 11, we will discuss a few novel ideas that can be used to make your Christmas packages a bright addition to the over-all beauty of your Christmas tree.

# 10

## *Let's Decorate the Home* *Indoors*



### THE DOORWAY

In Chapter 4 you will find many ideas and illustrations on how to decorate the outside of your door. In addition, to those ideas, you will, of course, find the outside door an ideal place to hang the wreaths and sprays already discussed, as well as the garlands and festoons to frame the door itself.

As for the inside of the door here is an idea that not only symbolizes the Christmas spirit but also will be an appropriate emblem for the approaching New Year. As shown in Figure 76, a horseshoe of appropriate weight and size for the door on which it is to be hung can be painted silver or gold. An arrangement of artificial berries, cones, and other decorations is placed on one side of the horseshoe and tied with a bow. The entire arrangement can then be hung on the door with the use of a small finishing nail.

Small red apples, shellacked or lacquered to give them added luster, are a delightful addition to such a grouping.

## THE HALLWAY

The welcome you provide for guests as they step into your front hallway can be brightened considerably by the use of lighted Christmas decorations. For example, a lighted bell suspended over a lovely Christmas arrangement on the hall table not only enhances the beauty of the arrangement but also serves to usher the guests into a holiday atmosphere. The bell can be made of chicken wire and covered with foil or evergreens. A regular household-sized socket can be wired to the inside of the bell and a 25-watt colored bulb inserted to act as a clapper. Or, for a subtle, indirect lighting effect, a 60- or 100-watt silvered bowl bulb can be used. Tape down the "clapper" to the inside of the bell so that it will not dangle and possibly break. (See *The Home Outdoors*, p. 49, for how to make lighted bells.)

Another way to light a hall table arrangement is to use a projector spotlight in a swivel-type holder that can be attached to the wall and concealed in a bell made of chicken wire and evergreens.

An intriguing hall table decoration can be fashioned from



Figure 76. "The best of luck" expressed by an attractive door decoration. Arranged by Mrs. W. H. Barton—photographed by H. Gallup.



plastic foam balls, a bed of evergreens, and some Christmas bulbs on a string. Figure 77 shows such an arrangement. The plastic foam balls can be bought with hollow centers so that bulbs may be inserted quickly. However, if you have only solid types available, they can be easily hollowed out with a sharp knife.



Figure 77. *Glowing snowballs in a bed of evergreens.*

Figure 78. *Christmas lamp in modern design.*



Another easily made but very colorful arrangement is shown in Figure 78. The stylized, modern Christmas tree is made from inexpensive materials: heavy fireproof wrapping paper, a string of Christmas tree lamps, a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch wooden dowel, and a plastic foam base attached to a square of plywood.

The paper cones can be made quickly by drawing a circle twice the desired diameter of the finished cone. (A pencil tied to a string that is anchored to the paper with a pin makes a good compass.) Be sure that you make the cones large enough so that they won't touch the lamps on the stem of the tree. Scissor the circle out from fireproof wrapping paper of a bright color and cut the paper circle through a radius (that is, in a straight line from the edge to the center of the circle). The cone can now be shaped by overlapping one cut end over the other to create a cone with the desired flare.

The stem of the tree is a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch wooden dowel pushed securely into the plastic foam base and then nailed to the plywood square, which has been painted an appropriate color. On the stem, place one bulb at the top (see sketch) for the top cone, three in the middle for the middle cone, and four at the lower end for the bottom cone. Anchor the bulbs in place with electrical tape. Now fasten the paper cones with gummed tape to the dowel stem, making sure that the paper is at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch away from the bulbs. In the illustration, the cones have been perforated with a decorative design by using an unthreaded sewing machine needle.

The decoration is completed with gilded evergreen cones arranged on a bed of long-needled pine. A glass cube gives an added modern accent.

Probably no hallway is quite complete without the traditional mistletoe overhead. Legend has it that mistletoe possesses magic powers. Today, however, it is a symbol of love and the maid who does not get kissed under the mistletoe, some say, is doomed to spinsterhood for the year to come.

Figure 79. The "kissing hoop." If you want a striped effect, you can use differently colored cellophane tape or ribbon, alternating the colors as you go along.



An old-fashioned "kissing hoop" can be made quickly and hung on a hallway ceiling fixture. Simply wrap two embroidery hoops in red satin ribbon, fix one inside the other at a right angle, and tie a cluster of mistletoe in the center. A red ribbon tied at the top completes the decoration, as shown in Figure 79.

If your theme is spiritual, the hall table is an ideal place to arrange a small creche. A simple but very artistic Nativity scene is depicted in Figure 80.

If you have a hall mirror, the plaque shown in Figure 81 will make a lovely decorative accent on each side of the mirror.

The base is a circle 12 inches in diameter made of plywood or similar lightweight material which has been gilded on the facing side and on the edge. Gold spray paint is convenient. A 4-inch pleated ruffle of copper screen wire is tacked one inch inside the outside rim of the base. The ruffle



Figure 80. *Angelic vigilance over the Christ Child. Arranged by Mrs. Ray Thorn.*

can be made from an 8-inch strip of screen that has been doubled over, thus making the outside edge smooth.

After the ruffle is applied, a circle of plastic foam is cut 10 inches in diameter and 1 inch thick and fastened securely to the plywood. Short clippings of juniper, boxwood, holly, or magnolia are inserted into the plastic foam. These should be placed close together in order to conceal the base. A flat hook for hanging is fastened at the back of the plywood circle.

Dried artichoke seed pods are used as the central decoration. A bow of moss green, gold, and yellow ribbon completes the plaque.

For the small fry, with eager fingers during Christmas time, place a "goody tree," like the one shown in Figure 82, on the hall table. The tree is made from heavy silver paper fashioned into a large cone. A long  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dowel, which serves as the stem of the tree, is nailed to the center of a coffee can that has been covered with bright red paper. The cone-shaped "tree" is then fastened to the stick with transparent cellophane tape. Interesting designs can be created by securing candies of vari-

Figure 81. *An unusual wreath for the hallway. Arranged by Mrs. W. H. Barton—photographed by H. Gallup.*



Figure 82. *The "goody" tree for little fingers.*



ous shapes, sizes, and colors to the tree with both transparent and colored cellophane tape. The miniature candles on the table are made out of peppermint sticks taped to a silver-papered candle-holder. A ring of sour balls is taped on a paper doily, which serves as a mat for paper drinking cups gaily decorated with brightly colored paper.

#### WINDOW DECORATIONS

Wreaths or candles have decorated windows for many Christmases past—and they still do. But, today, with the increasing use of picture or oversized windows, window decorations have become truly artistic productions.

Look at the lovely Christmas scene shown in Figure 83. Here is a reminder of the true meaning of Christmas—the



Figure 83. *A window decoration that expresses the spirit of Christmas with a home-made creche and delightful figurines.*



birth of the Prince of Peace. The scene was arranged on a wide window sill and a Paisley shawl was used as a landscape for the setting. The creche with its tree of rhododendron leaves is spotlighted by a 75-watt reflector spotlight placed in a wall-type holder located high on the window frame at the extreme right. Tiny angel figurines and Bethlehem candles in small holders on the glass shelves in the window complete the arrangement and afford a charming sight to the passerby outdoors.

For those who like to paint snowy scenes on window panes there is nothing more simple to apply and attractive to use than spray-on snow that comes in aerosol containers. Figure 84 shows a Christmas scene sprayed on a window pane; the cardboard masks that were used as spraying guides are shown also. Colored snow makes this scene a lovely thing to see.



Figure 84. (Left) *A sprayed-on Christmas scene in colored snow.*  
(Right) *The cardboard masks you will need.*

The tree was sprayed on first with green snow. White snow was then used for the roof of the house, the sloping hill, and as a light overcoating on the tree. The windows of the house and the star were sprayed with yellow snow.

An equally simple method of decorating a window is to cut out angels, stars, and snowflakes from colored metallic paper and to rubber-cement them in unique designs on the window pane. To add more sparkle, coat the facing sides with an adhesive such as rubber cement or clear nail polish and sprinkle glitter on them.

Figure 85 shows a picture window decorated in a lovely blend of light and evergreens. A valance of evergreens is delicately lighted by a string of lights covered by home-made stars. The glow of candles provides a softly lighted background for the evergreen bouquet. The stars can be made in the following manner.

Cut a five-pointed star from a piece of heavy cardboard. Then insert the neck of the bulb in a hole cut in the center of the star. Cut the hole just large enough to give a snug collar to the bulb. The cover of the star is made from a translucent material such as acetate cloth. Trace the design shown in the diagram and fold on the dotted lines. Reverse the folds to create "valleys" in the star and to give a three-dimensional effect. Then glue the flaps around the cardboard base, being careful not to destroy the star's shape. The star will take on the hue of the colored bulb you use.

For the family that may be cramped for space, a Christmas tree can easily be made if you have a large window with a Venetian blind. All you need is fire-resistant crepe paper, Christmas tree lamps on a string, and a lighted star. You can make the star by the same method described in the previous paragraph.

Draw the outline of the tree on the tightly closed Venetian blind with a china marking pencil so that it can be washed off easily after the holidays. Then, following the outline for

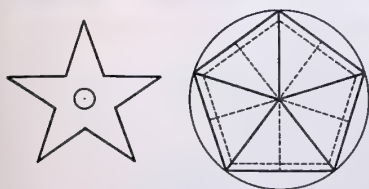


Figure 85. *The cheery light of Christmas for your picture window.*

shape, wrap each slat with strips of dark-green, fire-resistant crepe paper. Continue until the "tree" is complete. Arrange Christmas tree lamps in an upright position, securing the sockets to the slats with self-sticking tape, or, if you use clips, clipping the sockets to the slats. Be sure that the inside metal shells of the sockets do not touch the blind slats; or the lamps, the paper. Conceal the wires behind the blind slats.

Decorate with tiny colored ornaments and loops of tinsel. Crown the tree with a lighted star and arrange some holiday-wrapped packages on a table beneath the tree.



A lovely sight indeed, as shown in Figure 86.

The next window-decorating idea can be used either indoors or outdoors. That is, if it is to be viewed outdoors, the shadow box is fastened to the interior sill. If it is to be viewed indoors, the shadow box is attached to the outside of the window and painted to match the exterior of the house. Figure 87 shows a fascinating Christmas scene that can be arranged and subtly lighted with the use of shadow boxes.

Figure 86. *A Venetian blind Christmas "tree."*





To make the shadow box, cut an 18 inch x 22 inch section from a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick piece of plywood—or any appropriate-sized section that you desire. This serves as the backboard. Nail sides to the backboard. (Preferably  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch thick and 4 inches wide.) A hole can be drilled in one of the sides large enough to accommodate the wire of a string of lights and the lights placed inside the box, or the lights can be taped in place as shown in the drawing. Use all white bulbs and paint the inside of the box white to reflect the light.



Figure 87. *Shadow box to light up your favorite Christmas scene.*

A "skyline" made simply from a black paper cutout can be rubber-cemented to the window pane to conceal the sources of light.

#### MANTELS FOR A MERRY CHRISTMAS

A splendid place to create one of the centers of interest of

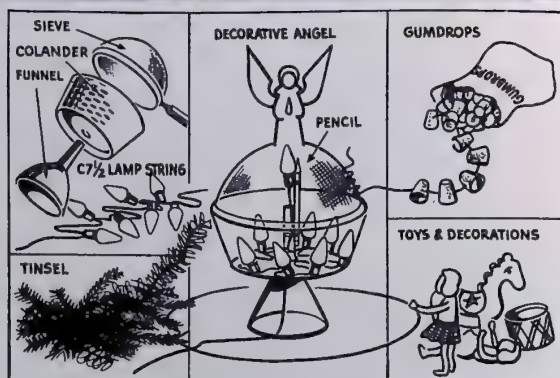


Figure 88. (Top) "Visions of sugar plums. . ." (Bottom) The how-to-do-it of it all.

your decorating scheme is the mantel over a fireplace. Mantel decorations can be simple or quite elaborate. Often, you may want to utilize the existing mantel decoration, such as a lovely French urn. Simply arrange in it very artfully some holly with massive centers of red berries. As an added touch you may want to place a pair of obelisk candles on either side of the decoration.

On the other hand, you may want to remove all the existing decorations on the mantel and build a Christmas arrangement unique and full of the spirit of the Season. For example, look at the mantel decoration shown in Figure 88. Surely, anyone who sees this glowing decoration will carry away visions of sugar plums dancing through his head.

The tree can be made from simple kitchen utensils. A sieve, a kitchen colander, and a funnel, together with an ordinary pencil, form the basic structure. A pound and a half of small candy gumdrops in assorted colors, several yards of dark green cellophane roping or tinsel (be sure they are fire resistant), a string of C-7½ Christmas tree lights, some miniature toy ornaments, plastic angels, and tiny doll children will be needed for the trimming of the sugar plum tree.

To assemble the sugar plum tree, make a hole in the bottom

Figure 89. *Madonna of the Flowers*. Arranged and photographed by Mrs. Goethe Link.



of the colander with a pair of old scissors or tinner's shears. The metal of the colander is soft and will cut quite easily. Insert the tip of the funnel into the hole in the colander, forming the base of the tree. Now arrange six Christmas tree lights as shown in the drawing and anchor them with tape. Wire a pencil to the tip of the funnel and attach the seventh light to the pencil as shown in the drawing. This light will give extra sparkle to the gumdrops. Remove the handle from the sieve and sew the gumdrops on to the mesh with needle and thread. Fill in any openings with tinsel or roping. Also, wrap roping a number of times around the colander base. Complete the trimming of the tree by decorating the funnel base with colored paper and paint, arranging the toy ornaments as shown in the picture, and placing the doll children in a circle under the tree. Top off the decoration with a tiny angel.

One of the most striking Christmas decorations for the mantel is a Madonna arrangement. The lovely composition shown in Figure 89 is made simply from a low white bowl, a



Figure 90. *A delicately arranged mantel decoration with the scent of the sea about it. Arranged by Mrs. F. P. O'Reilly.*



sublime Madonna, and a highly artistic arrangement of gladioli. However, Madonna arrangements usually need some supplementary decoration. Candles at each side are quite appropriate or evergreens carefully arranged might supply the needed sweep for the long mantel.

Another interesting mantel decoration is shown in Figure 90. A charming white figurine is haloed by a background of seafan painted pink. A twig also painted pink provides a place to hang rose-colored tiny Christmas ornaments. The figurine is set on a black base and surrounded by pink-painted yarrow and deeper pink pepper berries.

Wreaths, swags, and garlands make excellent materials for decorating the wall space behind the mantel.

Figure 91 shows a lighted wreath that can be made easily from a wire coat hanger, a set of Christmas lamps, materials that are normally used for wreath making, and a religious plaque. Bend the coat hanger into a circular frame shape, wrap a set of Christmas bulbs around the coat hanger wire, and tie greens to the frame with No. 22 or 24 binding wire. Notice how the bulbs are positioned so that one socket is located directly beneath the plaque. The plaque of the Christ Child is



Figure 91. *A lighted wreath for your mantel wall.*





centered in the wreath and placed on a background of metallic paper fastened to the wall. The wreath is trimmed with miniature fruits and berries. For effective lighting effects, use colored bulbs imbedded in the greens and a white bulb underneath the plaque.

Although the swag pictured in Figure 92 is a graceful decoration for any wall, it is very effective over a mantel.

Cut the base from plastic foam to the size and shape desired. Then completely cover the base by inserting sprigs of various evergreens. A mixture of evergreens adds an attractive touch of contrasting color and texture. Fasten bows at the ends of the swag, using different-colored ribbon. Maroon, purple, and chartreuse make an interesting color combination. Then wire inch-long strips of ribbon to floral picks and insert them among the evergreens. Artificial grapes in green and purple and colored Christmas balls can then be added to complete the trimming of the swag.

Tall columnar candles can be placed at each end of the mantel or a low grouping of Christmas figurines can be centered under the swag. For a really effective display, spotlight the entire decoration from above, using a wall-type holder concealed by a chicken wire frame studded with evergreens or covered with blue metallic foil.

Figure 92. *Swag decoration in lovely colors to hang over the mantel.*  
*Arranged by Mrs. W. H. Barton—photographed by H. Gallup.*



## TABLE DECORATIONS

Coffee tables, lamp tables, occasional tables, and, of course, dining tables are ideal places to set that favorite centerpiece, a lovely Christmas candle arrangement, or a delightful novelty Christmas tree.

For example, look at the intriguing "corsage" tree pictured in Figure 93. Here's a table decoration that not only will delight your guests but also will provide them with a lovely corsage to wear for your Christmas party. Make the tree from a cone of chicken wire and insert sprigs of evergreen in the wire mesh. If you fill the inside of the cone with moistened sphagnum or wood moss, your evergreen sprigs will hold their needles quite a long time as well as have a place to be anchored. Now take perhaps two dozen Sweetheart roses and tie a white ribbon around each rose stem. Insert the stems in miniature water tubes so that the flowers will stay fresh. All you need do now is push the water tubes among the evergreen sprigs and you have a fascinating and lovely "corsage" tree to place on the table of your choice.

If you want to delight your small-fry guests insert cellophane-wrapped lollipops of different colors into the chicken wire instead of roses. Then wire together some cranberries in a rope and loop it around the tree several times.



Figure 93. A "corsage" tree for your Christmas party.

Figure 94. *Gorgeous  
beauty in a table decoration.*



Figure 95. *A study in  
light and shadow.*

Figure 96. *Lighted Christmas "tree" table decoration.*



The table decoration shown in Figure 94 may stun you with its gorgeous rich look, but it need not overwhelm your arranging ability. The base is a large oval of plastic foam around whose sides a wide satin green ribbon is wrapped. In the center of the base, set a low bowl. Place two large, spiraled white candles at each side of the bowl. Now arrange a bouquet of red and white carnations, some sprigs of holly, and balsam fir branches that have been sprayed with snow. To give added sparkle and the Yuletide touch, make garlands of small Christmas tree balls and arrange them from the center of the design around the candles.

If you have a table set in a corner that can use some light, here is an idea that will intrigue your guests (Figure 95). Arrange feathery evergreen branches in a vase and conceal a 25-watt clear light bulb behind them. The interesting shadow effects will be quite fascinating. Of course, be sure that the bulb socket does not touch the water in the vase.

Another lighted decoration can be made simply with some evergreen twigs, a square of plywood to which a base of plastic foam is attached, a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch wooden dowel, and a string of Christmas tree lights. Push the  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch wooden dowel through the square of plastic foam and nail it securely to the



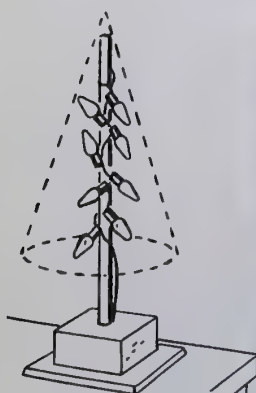
plywood base. Spiral a string of lights around the "dowel" trunk, securing them to the trunk with electrical tape. Make some reflectors from household aluminum foil. Be sure that, in placing them around the outside of the sockets, they do not touch the inside metal shell. Now insert evergreen branches into the plastic foam and attach some around the "dowel" trunk to form a tree.

When this tree is "lighted" on a corner table, as shown in Figure 96, you will love its bright, glowing beauty.

A variation of the "dowel" trunk tree is shown in Figure 97. The construction is exactly the same as the one just made, except that instead of evergreen branches, a large cone is fashioned from colored gift wrapping paper that is fairly heavy. This stylized tree makes a very attractive Christmas lamp for an end table.

Dining table centerpieces are, of course, favorite decorations during the Christmas time. Individual place settings decorated in the spirit of the Season, white linen cloths trimmed for Christmas with tiny bells or tinsel rope or made to look like a "Christmas package" by using broad bands of colored ribbon, all these make holiday dining more enjoyable.

Figure 97. *A stylized Christmas "tree" lamp for your end table.*





For the children, a gay carousel centerpiece vivid in Christmas colors will brighten their eyes and spark their appetites. The carousel centerpiece shown in Figure 98 is made simply from crepe paper, a cardboard stand and pole, some red cellophane tape for decoration, ordinary baking cups filled with "goodies," brightly colored Christmas tree ornaments, and a frilly bow.

Figure 98. *A kiddies' delight . . . carousel and candies.*





Figure 99. *Candle and canes, and candies too, for the small fry.*

Or a peppermint-stick candle surrounded by a candle-holder base arranged with Christmas candies will add a festive touch to a dining table. Figure 99 shows this pretty picture.

A "Lazy Susan" makes a perfect base for a centerpiece as shown in Figure 100. Arrange evergreens on each tier and add Christmas balls, pine cones, candy canes, and so on. Two red Christmas candles spiraled with evergreens complete the centerpiece. The spirals can easily be made by fastening evergreen sprigs to a single thread of florist wire.



Figure 100. *Lazy-susan table centerpiece.*

A lighted centerpiece will give you lovely color effects. A very simple one to make is to perch miniature Christmas "trees" made from pleated paper on Christmas tree lights and arrange them on a bed of evergreens. Aluminum foil or any opaque paper will serve for the trees. Figure 101 shows how the "trees" are made and placed over the Christmas lights. Cut a circle of paper about 6 inches in diameter. Fold in half, then in quarters, and finally in eighths. Cut out tiny diamonds or



Figure 101. *The soft glow of Christmas lights for your holiday dining table.*

squares to form a pattern that will allow light to shine through. Open the trees and reverse every other pleat to form a "tree" that will stand up. Now, on a table mirror, fasten Christmas tree bulbs on a string with self-sticking tape so that the bulbs are upright. Next, place the paper "trees" over the lights, surround them with evergreens, and trim with miniature Christmas ornaments. To conceal the electric cord, wrap it with white crepe paper to blend with your white table cloth.

Dining by candlelight will bring to your Holiday Season all the suggestion of peace and well being characteristic of Christmas. Today, candles are available in a fascinating variety



Figure 102. *Dining by candlelight. Arranged by Mrs. Norma Simpson.*

Figure 103. *Background for holiday dining.*





of Christmas designs, and with a little artistic arrangement your table will be graced with soft light and beauty. The "snowball" candles shown in Figure 102 have a red core that makes them glow in a delightful color when lighted. The arrangement is simply trimmed with evergreen needles, Christmas balls, and tiny reindeer.

Besides the dining table, the room itself can be decorated to provide a holiday atmosphere and incidentally some nice lighting effects for dining. A charming background for your holiday dining table is shown in Figure 103. The graceful swag is lighted by colored Christmas lights intertwined with the feathery evergreens. The lighted valance bathes the dining table in a soft light.

#### BOOKCASES FOR CHRISTMAS DISPLAY

Often a long, low bookcase affords a wonderful place to set a Christmas decoration. The wall space behind it can also be utilized to add striking effects. Figure 104 shows an attractive display that will fascinate your guests and evoke many a favorable comment.

Figure 104. *For that long, low bookcase, a pattern of glowing light and dark evergreen.*





Conceal a string of C-7 ½ Christmas tree lights behind the back upper edge of the bookcase. The wire can be strung along the back, and the sockets can be fastened with electrical tape so that the bulbs are upright. Make sure the bulbs don't touch the wood. Now arrange greenery and figurines on the top of the bookcase. Decorate the wall with graceful loops of tinsel, shiny metallic foil stars, and sprays of evergreens. To spotlight the figurine group, place a bell with a lighted "clapper" directly overhead.

For a bookcase shelf, an appropriate decoration is the creche pictured in Figure 105. A clear candelabra-base bulb is concealed beneath the fireproof angel hair that has been arranged in the manger. The light provides an aura about the figure of the Christ Child. Evergreens fastened to wire form the palm trees at the right of the picture and a large spray of evergreen branches frames the decoration.



Figure 105. *Creche on a book-shelf.*

## *Gift Wrapping and Christmas Cards*



Gift wrapping during Christmas time is an activity so rich with decorating ideas that probably an entire book could be devoted to the more interesting ones. In the short space of a few pages, we can present only a few hints in making neat packages and a few ideas that you may like to try.

### SOME GIFT-WRAPPING KNOW-HOW

Avoid bunchiness in wrapping your package. A two-inch tuck at each end of a rectangular package is adequate. Fold the ends in a neat miter and hold down with cellophane tape or Christmas seals. Make sure that you have a neat, securely wrapped package before you add the decorations.

The decorations you use can be infinite in variety. Besides, of course, the many uniquely designed wrapping papers, you can paste on the wrapped package cutouts of such things as stylized Santas, children, sleighs, bells, stars, candy canes, and the many designs characteristic of the Season. Or you may

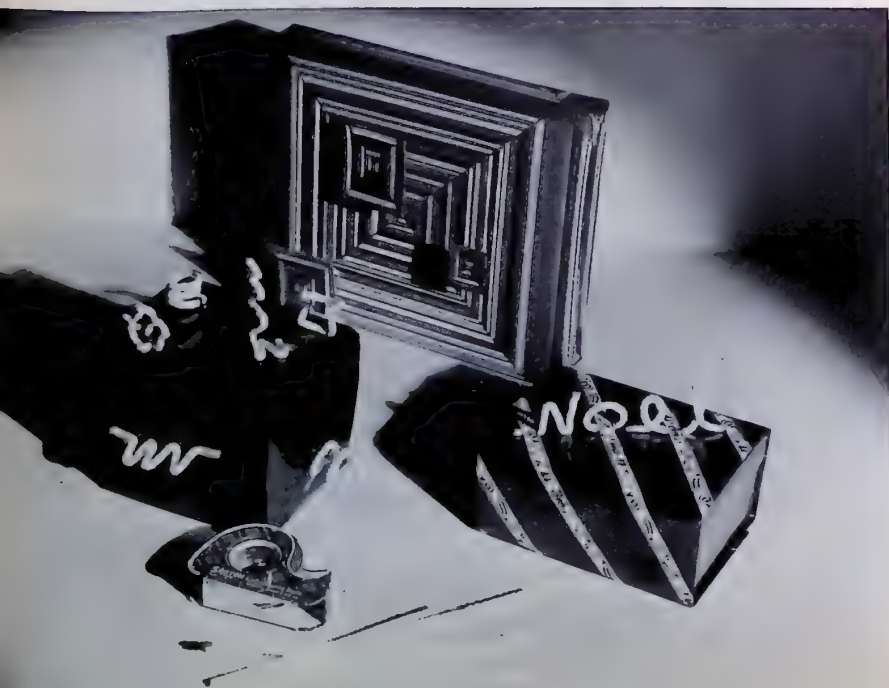
Figure 106. *The best things come in little packages.*



want to attach evergreen corsages, Christmas ornaments, bundles of colored plastic straws tied to form pompons, candies, and, of course, colored cellophane tape in attractive designs.

Metallic glitter is ideal decorative material for gifts. Figure 106 shows how glitter can be placed on cellophane tape and how a sparkling decorative touch can be added to a package. This idea is especially suitable for small gift boxes, such as those that contain jewelry whose preciousness is quite disproportional to the size of the box.

Figure 107. *Gift packages for the man of the house.*



## UNUSUAL IDEAS

That gift package for Dad usually is a problem, for too many gift wrapping ideas aren't quite virile enough. Figure 107 shows some gift wrapping designs that not only have the masculine touch but are very attractive as well. Pipe cleaners and cellophane tape provide the decorative effects. The center package has a three-dimensional look to boot. The three-dimensional effect is created with small pieces of pipe cleaner. One end of the pipe cleaner is taped to the package and the other end to bits of left-over wall paper.

After you have decorated the packages, the final touch

## ROSE

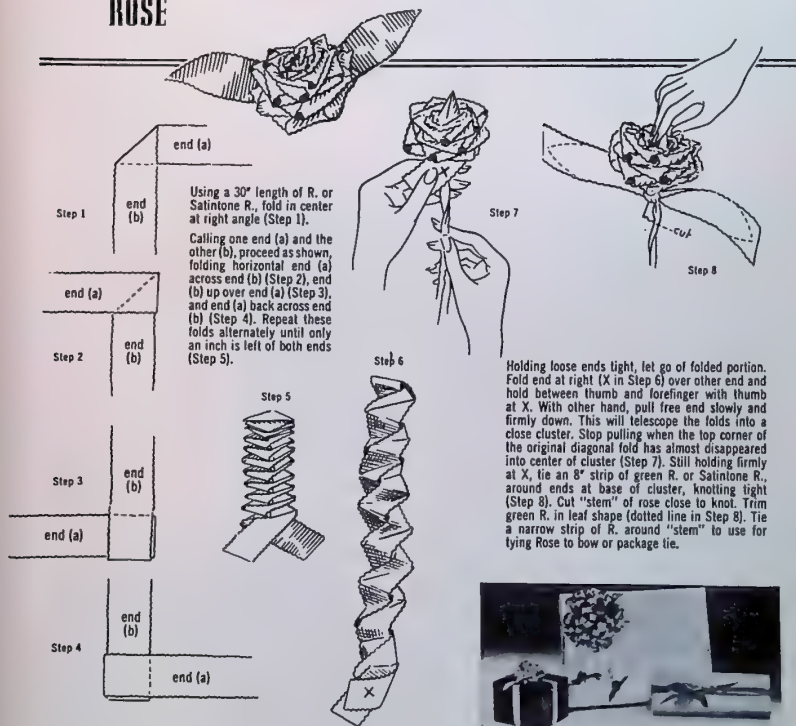


Figure 108. *A rose is a rose is a rose . . . even in a bow tied to a package.*



Figure 109. A "spinning Christmas tree."

Figure 110. Make your own Christmas cards.





can be added with bows of various designs. Bows made to resemble wheels, bells, butterflies, hearts, flames—all are beautiful accents for the Christmas packages. An especially attractive design is the rose bow shown in Figure 108. Complete directions for making the bow are given with the illustration.

Now that the packages are wrapped, here is a unique place to put them—a spinning “Christmas tree.” This idea should delight the children, although grown-ups too will be fascinated. Figure 109 shows the “spinning tree” all decorated and with presents attached.

The base is a hoop of the kind children like to play with, although a barrel hoop appropriately covered could do as well. Equal lengths of red and green cotton yarn are tied to the hoop so that they are equally spaced around its circumference. Then their free ends are brought together and fastened to a shower curtain hook from which the “mobile” is suspended.

To give stability and to make the strings taut, gift packages are hung from the hoop. Use ribbons to suspend the packages. Christmas balls and tinsel stars are taped to the yarn, and ornaments you can make yourself complete the trimming. Red and green ribbon can be fashioned into chains and spiralling circles. These can be put together with the help of transparent cellophane tape.

Hang this tree with sturdy cord from the ceiling or in a place where it has plenty of room to spin, and there'll be lots of fun in your house this Christmas.

#### CHRISTMAS CARDS

No Christmas is quite complete without a Christmas card greeting. Since more and more people are making their own Christmas cards, here are three suggestions that you may like to try. Figure 110 shows the simple but unusual designs that can be made with brightly colored cellophane tape pasted on heavy white paper. And certainly you need not be an artist to embellish the card with a simple hand-drawn design and a personal hand-written Christmas message.

